POLITICS OF MASS LITERACY IN INDIA
A case study of two north Indian villages under the 'Total Literacy Campaign' 1988-95

By

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ABSTRACT

This project is a study of the politics of mass literacy in India. It sets the problem of literacy in the context of public discourses, institutional practices and formation of various identities related to educational and development goals in contemporary Indian society. The study is centered around specific case studies of two villages under the 'Total Literacy Campaign' (TLC) launched nationwide in May 1988 by the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA). Despite marginal improvement in literacy rates since independence, there has been a steady increase in the absolute number of total 'illiterates', which is bigger than the size of 'literates'. Also the gap between 'literates' and 'illiterates' has been ever-increasing. The government admits its failures towards mass education and hence now it has declared promotion of literacy as a national mission. To counter its past failures, it has launched a 'total campaign' approach in adult literacy programme along with 'Education For All' (EFA) goal in general towards elementary education. Thus this project is a study of the pedagogic principles, practice and public policy on promotion of mass education and literacy in India. It seeks to study the cultural and linguistic bases of mass literacy and the democratic i.e. participatory and interactive/discursive methods of literacy promotion. The study is based on new socio-cultural approaches to language, discourse-learning, identity and culture (Introduction, Chapter 1). It is an interdisciplinary study in literacy practices (language and discourse learning) whose development is traced with colonial history of social, political and educational development in north India (Chapters 2&3). It traces these developments beginning with nationalist thinking on nation-building, mass literacy and education during the freedom movement before 1947 (Chapter 2), and the evolution of public policy goals on education and its culture after 1947 (Chapter 3). It looks into why highest 'illiteracy' exists in the Hindi- speaking states and how adequately our educational planners have addressed these complex problems. The policy principles and institutional practices in learning are further examined in case studies of two villages in Bihar and Haryana (Chapters 4&5). TLC's pedagogic principles, practices and relevance as seen and understood by learners are examined in order to establish the real contexts of a learning. This is also done through a concrete area of language and content analysis of the TLC reading materials, the way TLC Primers (texts) have been presented to the learners and the ways these texts are interacted with, by the adult learners (Chapter 6). We thus endeavour to establish the issue of literacy-learning in terms of survival, cultural and identity needs of the learner. All these discussions are primarily based on adult learners' and concerned people's historical, social, and classroom experiences.

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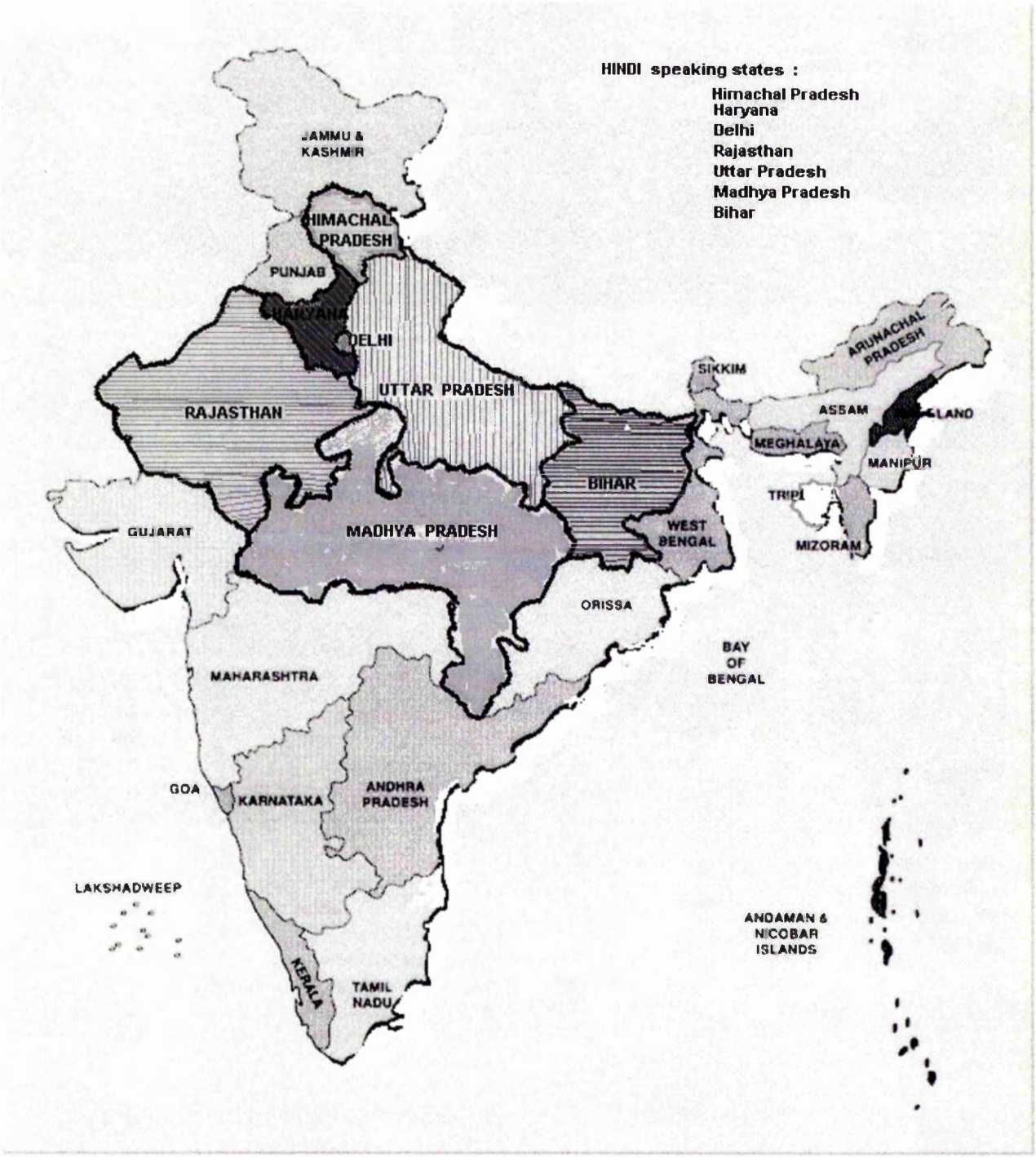
CONTENTS

Abbreviations

BEP	Bihar Education Project
BGVS	Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (a national level voluntary organisation)
BIMARU	Hindi- speaking states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education (D/O Education, New Delhi)
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi)
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DAE	Directorate of Adult Education
DC	Deputy Commissioner or District Collector
EFA	Education For All
FLAW	Functional Literacy for Adult Women
GNP, GDP	Gross National Product, Gross Domestic Product
GOI	Government of India
IAEA	Indian Adult Education Association
IPCL	Improved Pace and Content of Learning
JRY	*Jawahar Rozgar Yojna*
JSN	*Jana Shikshan Nilayam*
KRPs	Key Resource Persons
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MP	Madhya Pradesh, Member of Parliament
MTs	Master Trainers
NAEP	National Adult Education Programme (1978)
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
ND	New Delhi
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIAE	National Institute of Adult Education, New Delhi
NIEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi
NLM	National Literacy Mission
NLMA	National Literacy Mission Authority
OUP	Oxford University Press
PLC	Post Literacy Campaign
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SDP	State Domestic Product
SRC	State Resource Centre
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TLC	Total Literacy Campaign
UEE	Universalisation of Elementary Education
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UP	Uttar Pradesh, previously called United Province
UT	Union Territory
VEC	Village Education Committee
VOs	Voluntary Organisations
VTs	Volunteer Teachers
ZSS	*Zila Saksharta Samiti* (District Literacy Council)


HINDI speaking states :
Himachal Pradesh
Haryana
Delhi
Rajasthan
Uttar Pradesh
Madhya Pradesh
Bihar
JAMMU & KASHMIR
HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUNJAB
HARYANA
DELHI
UTTAR PRADESH
RAJASTHAN
BIHAR
MADHYA PRADESH
GUJARAT
ORISSA
WEST BENGAL
SIKKIM
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
ASSAM
MEGHALAYA
MANIPUR
TRIPURA
MIZORAM
BAY OF BENGAL
MAHARASHTRA
GOA
KARNATAKA
ANDHRA PRADESH
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Chapter 1

Introduction : The Perspective on Literacy

1. AIM, SCOPE AND MEANING OF LITERACY

This project is a study of the politics of mass literacy in India. It sets the problem of literacy in the context of the development of public discourses, institutional practices, and the formation of various identities related to educational policy goals and growth in contemporary Indian society. The study is centered around specific case studies of two villages under the 'Total Literacy Campaign' (TLC) launched nationwide in May 1988 by the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA). Article 45 of the Indian Constitution (1950) sets out the goal of making provision for 'free and compulsory' education for all children below fourteen years of age. In addition, 'special care of the economic and educational interests of the under-privileged sections of the population is also a Constitutional obligation'[1]. These goals were originally meant to be fulfilled within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Indian Constitution. However, they remain elusive till today.

The Indian government in a formal sense has always shown its keenness to promote these objectives of mass education. It considers education and literacy as important to improve people's condition: literacy is a 'tool, a facilitator, a doorway to self-discovery, a passage which leads to the mainstream of social and economic life ... a dynamic force ...'[2]. Its assumptions are (1) that a better knowledge of the social world, the arts and skills of life that cater for the everyday needs of the individual, the society and the nation, should be made available to all; (2) that the over 300 million people in India who are 'illiterate', are not so by their own 'making or volition', but by 'an accident'[3]; (3) that these marginalised people are quite 'intelligent and resourceful, often mature and sensible', they have the 'latent energy, creativity and a strong sixth sense' but in the 'absence of access to the world of information', and the print and non-print media, 'they lack means of conversion of their energy into resources and resources into strength'[4].

These being the explicit assumptions of the government in promoting literacy and education, the first question for our study is how far these assumptions are consistent with

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[1] Education for All - The Indian Scene, A Synopsis (1993), D/O Education, GOI, 1
[2] International Literacy Day , September 8, (1993), DAE, GOI, 4
[3] Compendium of Instruction on National Literacy Mission Vol. II, (1992), D/O Education, 49
[4] ibid.

each other, and with the actual processes of growth of mass literacy. Another central and pertinent question is - what could be the best means, principles and strategies to achieve such educational goals, and how well have they been used by governments. As we shall see, all the three assumptions appear to be consistent with a high ideal. At a deeper level, however, they contain monolithic and homogenesing values which may not be consistent with maintaining cultural diversity in Indian society. For example, assumption (2) fails to identify with the adult learner's life. It sees their misery as an 'accident' and not as something related to the social, political and economic structure which necessarily produces such consequence. Assumption (3) without clarifying the nature and role of the world of information and print-literacy, makes them a neutral and an apolitical factor in the empowerment of the marginalised people. In the last 50 years, the Indian government has done well in making provision for higher education for a small, privileged minority. However, the Government admits that it has failed in promoting a relevant programme of mass education, literacy and knowledge that would be useful and practically suited to ordinary citizens[5]. Whatever little provision has been made towards schooling the masses, the majority find it either unsuitable, unavailable or inaccessible. As a result, in a plural and multicultural society like India with vast socio-economic disparities and regional imbalances, the gap between the 'educated' and the 'uneducated', between the 'literate' and the 'illiterate' has been growing steadily[6].

At present, there are about 280.7 million 'illiterates' in India in the 15+ age-group, and 336.1 million in the 7+ age-group, the largest number for any country in the world[7]. Despite marginal improvement in the literacy rate since 1951, there has been a steady increase in the absolute number of total 'illiterates'[8]. To counter its past failures in literacy and mass education, the government in 1988 launched a 'total campaign' approach[9] for the

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[5] ibid.

[6] Education may be broadly seen as consisting of exploratory and creative use of all human skills, and literacy as consisting of use of specific skills of the 3Rs, more particularly communication and comprehension skills in language. For an analysis of increasing gap between the educated and the uneducated, see V.K. Ramachandran *et.al.* (1997), 'Investment Gaps in Primary Education', Economic and Political Weekly (henceforth EPW) Vol. XXXII, Nos. 1& 2, 39-45

[7] Statistical Database for Literacy, Vol. 1, (1992), NIAE, GOI, 1; and International Literacy Day (1993), 3

[8] 'Today, while the elementary education system of India has expanded into one of the largest in the world, the country also possesses the dubious distinction of having the world's largest number of out-of-school children (22 percent of the global total) and adult illiterates (30 percent of the global population)'. See Education for All - The Indian Scene, A Synopsis (1993), 3; also Radhakrishnan and Akila (1993), 'India's Educational Efforts: Rhetoric and Reality', EPW Vol. XXVIII, No. 48, 2613-2619

[9] see Appendix 1

adult education programme, along with the general goal of 'Education For All' (EFA)[10]. The government claimed that the present 'campaign' approach in the literacy programme of adult education scheme took note of the 'distortions and imbalances' of earlier programmes, by 'converting it' from a 'government-controlled programme' to a 'people's programme'[11]. The 'campaign' strategy called for an all-out mobilisation and people's participation, and for a 'war on illiteracy' replacing the earlier approach which focused mainly on groups of learners as recipients of pre-packaged skills[12]. It aimed to make about 80-100 million adults functionally literate by 1995.

In this study we intend to examine the theory and principles of literacy promotion in India as contained in the revised programme of the TLC-1988 as well as the nature of its practical implementation. The relevance of any theory of literacy promotion is dependent on its practice and its achievements, both judged in terms of the actual state of knowledge - the linguistic competence and ignorance - exhibited by the mass of people prior to and after the implementation. What people actually know and believe, how they use language to express themselves and to know others are the actual basis on which any intended programme of adult literacy can be assessed. Our aim in this study is to find out how far people's knowledge and linguistic resources have been taken into account by the TLC adult educators. We shall analyse all these aspects of TLC implementation in the light of new socio-cultural approaches to communication, participation, language and literacy-learning[13]. The broad theoretical understanding will be guided by elements taken from the

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[10] EFA has nothing new but a new slogan adopted under the auspices of UNESCO campaign. In case of India, it has simply combined the (1) pre-school and (2) adult education dimensions to earlier existing (3) Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) scheme. These dimensions include:

1. '*Expansion of early childhood care and development activities* especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children';
2. '*Drastic reduction in illiteracy*, particularly in the 15-35 age group, ... ensuring that the levels of the three R's are relevant to the living and working conditions of the people'; and the existing
3. '*Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE),* viewed as a composite programme of:

- access to elementary education for all children upto 14 years of age;
- universal participation till ... elementary stage through formal or non-formal education programmes;
- universal achievement at least of minimum levels of learning.'

The target group of EFA in India constitutes 'about 19 to 24 million children in the age group 6-14 of whom 60 percent are girls, and about 122 million adult illiterates in the age group 15-35 of whom 62 percent are women'. See Education For All - The Indian Scene, (1993), 13; also see Synopsis of the same document.

[11] Compendium of Instructions ..., op.cit.

[12] Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society: NPE, 1986, Part 1, D/O Education, GOI, 197-198

[13] These new approaches have been discussed and emphasised by recent studies:- R.N. Srivastava, Studies in Language and Linguistics (Selected Writings of RN Srivastava) Vol. I (1993), Vol. III (1994), and Vol. IV (1995); James Paul Gee (1996), Social Linguistics and Literacies ; Madan Sarup (1996), Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World ; PRASHIKA- Eklavya's Innovative Experiment in Primary Education (1994); McKay and Romm (1992), People's Education in theoretical Perspective ; Philip Wexler (1992), Becoming Somebody - Toward a Social Psychology of School ; Margie Berns (1990), Contexts of Competence - Social and Cultural Considerations in Communicative Language Teaching ; R.E. Young (1989), A critical theory of education - Habermas and Our Children's Future ; Rambilas Sharma (1989), *Bhasha Aur Samaj* ; Brian V

work of M.K. Gandhi in India, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Jürgen Habermas. In their vision, approach and concern for mass and public education, these thinkers have many similarities rather than differences. Some of the relevant ideas will be integrated here into a combined perspective which may be called an interactive-communicative approach to a practical programme of mass literacy and education. Though the project has been launched throughout India, this study will be confined to case studies of two villages in the Hindi-speaking states of northern India, one in Bihar (the poorest and most backward state) and the other in Haryana (the richest and much more developed state). In more concrete terms, we are interested to find out why the highest 'illiteracy' (52%) exists in the Hindi-speaking states and how adequately India's educational policy makers have addressed the problem of the educational backwardness in these states[14]. In general terms, we are also interested in analysing how far the Indian government's policy towards mass education and literacy is adequate to the needs of the majority (two-third) population, which is primarily traditional in outlook, and lives an existence that is rural and agriculture-based.

2. THE ACT OF LEARNING: LITERACY AND PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE

Historically and biologically, speech comes before writing. Writing is a cultural invention which comes later. Research shows that a child from its very birth behaves as a socially communicative being, and much before s/he develops speech, s/he shows the existence of 'proto-conversation', communication in terms of actions, movements, sounds, gestures of love, warmth, discomfort, etc.[15] Human language as a social and historical communicative system is qualitatively different from any other means of animal or computerized communication. Human language alone is capable of making thought and expression possible. Our capacity to analyse the past, understand the present, and organise the future is dependent on our skill to articulate a language, which in itself is inseparable from grammar and the need to communicate. If proto-conversation prefigures adult conversation, we can make three generalizations: (a) man's capacity to communicate is inherent; (b) central to this capacity is the skill of verbal interactivity; and (c) language-learning gets internalised in and through this process of verbal interaction[16]. If we take a

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Street (1984), Literacy in Theory and Practice ; S.B. Heath (1983), Ways with Words ; Scollon and Scollon (1981), Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication

[14] 52% of the nation's 'illiterates' are in Hindi-speaking states, and these states are among the nine most educationally backward states in India., see National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and all CABE Committee Reports after NPE 1986, D/O Education, GOI

[15] R.N. Srivastava (1995), 140

[16] Srivastava (1995), 140-148

continuum representing development of speech and written communication forms, literacy can be seen to be a progressive and continuous process where writing skills are always related to a prior oral competency. Every child first acquires a certain amount of coherence in speech (articulacy) rather than literacy. Language learning then, proceeds indefinitely and continuously from orality (articulacy) to an institutionalised writing system which is technically called literacy. Even in this technical sense, literacy-learning skills are transferred from the mother-tongue, or first speech language to the second, or from the vernacular to other dominant standard languages. Seen this way as a continuum, literacy learning is a *continuous* and *never-ending process*. None of us can ever claim to be completely literate, rather than sufficiently so. Once literacy is acquired in one language, i.e. either in the mother-tongue or the local vernacular, it can be extended to other languages for a wider communication. Even literacy in one language (mono-literacy) can be extended to different functional spheres of the same language, from the private sphere of the family and peer groups to the local public sphere of the local market or religious institutions. The domain consequently can extend to a second or a third language, i.e. bi-literacy or multi-literacy.

Thus in principle, in the multilingual context of India, literacy in the mother-tongue can be extended, rather than removing individuals and training them from a scratch in a second language, e.g. standardised Hindi. In north India, at the lowest level of linguistic topography there are various mother-tongues or primary languages, or the regional dialects, e.g. *Santhali* in the case of parts of Bihar, or *Haryanavi, Braj, Avadhi, Magahi, Bhojpuri, Maithili* elsewhere, which serve a vernacular communication function in a smaller area. 'Some of these languages - Maithili, Avadhi, Braj Bhasha and Khari Boli - have literary traditions of several centuries, while others - Bhojpuri and Magahi - have rich folk literatures'[17]. At the next level, popular Hindi, also called Hindustani is used for communication in the domain of the supra-local economy. At the highest or third level is a regional standard language, i.e. Sanskritised Hindi or Persianised Urdu, or English which is used for communication in the domain of formal education, official transactions and spheres of abstract knowledge and scientific thought[18]. Popular Hindi or Hindustani in contemporary India also qualifies as a pan-Indian language of wider communication. It serves as a link or contact language throughout central and north India, for trade and commerce, mass entertainment and everyday needs of informal inter-group interaction.

[17] CR King (1994), One Language, Two Scripts - The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India, 8
[18] Srivastava (1993), 87-96

According to American linguist John J Gumperz, in north and central India, the regional dialects at the lowest level of linguistic topography form 'a continuous chain from Sind to Assam, with mutual intelligibility between adjacent areas' though this mutual intelligibility is not attested between dialects of distant locales[19]. Hindustani or popular Hindi which is the second level of north Indian linguistic topography overlaps and overlies the first level. This second level exhibits a relatively more homogeneous form, and is used all over north and central India. The regional standard, which is either 'High Hindi' or 'High Urdu', sits at the top of the first two levels of the linguistic topography. This level uses standard speech norms, and is used by a minority of educated elites, formal institutions and offices. Historically, this stratum or level originated or developed from one and the same language i.e. the *Khariboli* regional standard of the western Uttar Pradesh area. Both the form and style of Hindi and Urdu share a common grammatical basis and syntactic structure. Although some scholars prefer to see them as two distinct languages, others argue that they are distinct only in the political and cultural sense but not on a linguistic basis[20]. They differ mainly in vocabulary and script. C.R. King writes: 'The most formal level of Hindi, sometimes referred to as "high Hindi", uses a vocabulary saturated with Sanskrit, while the corresponding level of Urdu, sometimes called "high Urdu", draws heavily on Persian and Arabic. On this level the two come close to mutual unintelligibility. Other less formal levels of Hindi and Urdu approach complete mutual intelligibility, the main difference being the script employed'[21]. In north India, all speech communities exhibit features of grass-roots bilingualism, and in some cases multilingualism.

Our understanding is that literacy-learning and change in consciousness are issues inseparable from the communicative functions of the language used by a group of (adult) learners - their culture, values, symbols, practices and institutions. Traditionally, until now, literacy has been defined as skill in the 3Rs, i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic. This traditional definition makes the use of literacy neutral, and leaves out an important question - reading and writing for what purpose? Some use print for pleasure, some for gossip, a few for information, still fewer for enlightenment and liberation. The book can be both a window to the outside world as well as a masked truth. The traditional view of literacy as an ability to 'read and write' locates literacy in the individual rather than in the social language. Its emphasis is on 'verbal semiotics' rather than 'social semiotics'. As such it

[19] John J Gumperz (1964) quoted in R.N. Srivastava (1994), 16
[20] King (1994), 8
[21] ibid.

obscures the multiple discursive ways in which literacy interrelates with communication, meaning-making, making of various identities, group relations, and the relationship between power and knowledge. It also obscures the ways in which the dialectics between dissemination of information and its control make literacy-learning a difficult task.

The traditional view of literacy, which is still prevalent in almost all mainstream schools and literacy programmes in India, is inadequate. It is inadequate because it 'rips literacy out of its sociocultural contexts and treats it as an asocial cognitive skill with little or nothing to do with human relationships. It cloaks literacy's connections to power, to social identity, and to ideologies, often in the service of privileging certain types of literacies and certain types of people'[22]. Paulo Freire argues that learning to "read the world", involves 'a form of literacy dependent not just on a command of surface cultural codes, but on an ability to reach one another across conditions of time and space through gifts of interpretation and translation'[23]. Literacy-learning can be viewed as an ability to both control and use a language and its structure of common-sense coherently and effectively. As a skill, literacy implies three things: (a) skill in the mechanics of writing, i.e. graphic representation; (b) pragmatic skills in reading and writing, i.e. language coding and decoding; and (c) skills to use language in a social and cultural context[24]. The traditional definition emphasised only the first two aspects of literacy. In a wider context, literacy consists not only in an ability to use language and its different communicative functions, both in an 'oral' and 'written' medium, but involves integration and control of varied aspects of language-use.

Linguistic competence with an orientation toward biologically determined cognitive capacity of human beings was at the heart of traditional theories of literacy. We prefer to view literacy-learning as skills in communicative competence in social and public life, and it is not simply an extension of the former but involves a change in theoretical perspective on the use and learning of a language and its grammar. Traditional literacy focuses on language as a cognitive faculty, or as an element of cognitive capacity of human beings. We prefer to focus more on the functional and expressive potentials of a language, and accept the view that grammar is not only inherent and implicit in the act of communication but becomes internalised through a long-term process of recognition,

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[22] Gee (1996), 46

[23] Freire and Macedo(1987), Literacy: Reading Word and the World, quoted in David G Smith (1992), Modernism, Hyperliteracy, and the colonisation of Word, Alternatives, Vol. 17, No. 2

[24] Srivastava (1993), 19

practice, and application[25]. Traditionalists see language as a verbal or structure-dependent formal semantics, and emphasise replication or adherence to uniformity in the structure. We prefer to see it as social semiotics which has a use-dependent communicative intention, and is based on diversity in organisation. Traditionally, the unit of analysis and learning has been a rule-oriented 'sentence' with special emphasis on form, but our concern in the main, and above all, lies in the communicative 'function' of a language as a whole.

It may be useful for our discussion in subsequent chapters to point out that some of the communicative features which we have emphasised above, are not only emphasised in modern academic education theory. These ideas were, to some extent, present in the Brahminical and the Buddhist traditions of literacy transmission in India. In both traditions, the transmission of knowledge and skills was primarily 'oral', though 'written' texts were also available. Kathleen Gough notes that their stress was on contextual use of the spoken word, on dialogue and memorization[26]. The problem with these traditions was that they accepted only limited use of writing skills, and particularly restricted its use by other lower groups or castes. However, the mode of transmission of information and communication was based on the language ecology of groups, their occupational needs and social practices[27]. For example, the Buddhist tradition, as Scollon and Scollon write, was 'characterized by a looseness in regard to the text. Oral interpretation and elaboration were necessary for understanding. Not only copying for dissemination but also translation were fostered. It was in this tolerance of deviation from the original text that the way was opened for popular literacy movement'[28]. Satish Saberwal adds that within the confinement of the caste-order, there was 'relatively intense give and take internally', relationships and skills 'reached well beyond one's locality', but the 'skills of creating new communities, except within the caste-logic, were not much practiced'[29].

The significant point to note here is that Indian tradition of learning, like the modern European 'structuralist-essayist' literacy, had both merits and demerits. The term 'structuralist-essayist' literacy is used in two senses: one emphasizing importance of structure and forms in language, and another as a model of literacy which is based on the values of essayist prose style, that is characteristically part of modern technological consciousness and 'rationalist' or 'positivist' principles[30]. The 'structuralists' consider

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[25] Works of H.E. Piepho and L. Gerster (1979) quoted in Margie Berns (1990), 122
[26] Kathleen Gough (1968), 'Literacy in Kerala' in Jack Goody (ed.) Literacy in Traditional Societies, 133-60
[27] Satish Saberwal (1995), Wages of Segmentation, 155-158
[28] Scollon and Scollon (1981), 45; and Kathleen Gough, op.cit., 145
[29] Saberwal (1995), 157
[30] see Mckay and Romm (1992), Chapter 2; Scollon and Scollon (1981), Chapter 3; and JP Gee (1996), 60

knowledge as something existing outside human consciousness[31]. Thus in a 'structuralist-essayist' literacy, 'the important relationships to be signalled are those between sentence and sentence, not those between speakers, nor those between sentence and speaker. For a reader this requires a constant monitoring of grammatical and lexical information. With the heightened emphasis on truth value, rather than social or rhetorical conditions, comes the necessity to be explicit about logical implications'[32]. However, we believe that 'structures' exist only in the way human subjects experience them, and not independently. Even if they exist independently, they do not constrain human thinking and action independent of our consciousness. They make sense only the way they concern us. 'They therefore have a precarious character because of the ongoing "meaning-making" activity of humans'[33]. Unlike the Indian traditions, the structuralist-essayist form of literacy which emerged in modern Europe was suited to the emerging needs and circumstances of technological and social control, whereas the merits of the Brahminical and the Buddhist traditions were more relevant to Indian reality. Scollon and Scollon argue that while differences in literacy needs and interests are largely played out in specific circumstances of face-to-face and written communication between groups and communities, they largely have their basis in economic and political factors[34].

Although speech and writing have distinct techniques and ways of expression, the 'structuralist-essayist' or what Brian Street calls 'autonomous literacy studies' tend to emphasise that there is no free interplay between them[35]. The structuralist-essayists emphasise that the 'text' as a structure-dependent system of 'writing' in literacy-learning is absolute and inviolable. According to them, ideally 'all meaning resides in the text' which is of course a mistake, because that is 'impossible to achieve'[36]. Referring to Michel Foucault, Scollon and Scollon point out that as an ideal, the structure- and form- dependent essayist literacy 'expresses a view of the world as rational and of an identity between rational knowledge and linguistic expression'[37]. Essayist literacy is based on assumptions of 'complete expressibility' in a 'text' which requires clear observation and rational

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[31]. The term 'structuralist' is used among others, by Mckay and Romm (1992). It 'refers to sociological perspectives which base their theoretical presuppositions on the concept of social "structure" as an independent force. They view society as something "out there" which has an existence of its own (*is sui generis*) and which therefore impinges on human social behaviour'. *Functionalists* and certain *Marxists* like Althusser, are included in this category. see p. 27

[32] Gee, op. cit.

[33] Mckay and Romm (1992), 46

[34] Scollon and Scollon (1981), xi

[35] Brian Street (1984), see Introduction

[36] Scollon and Scollon (1981), 49

[37] Michel Foucault (1973), The order of things, quoted in Scollon and Scollon (1981), 49

thinking. 'The logic of syntactic cohesion dominates essayist texts. Vagueness and indexicality are ruled out. One can see the development of structural studies of grammar as a strong representation of the componentiality of the modern consciousness'[38]. According to Berger, Berger and Kellner, modern consciousness is a product of modern bureaucratic practices and institutions of technology, and these together have given rise to a modernist paradigm of structuralist-essayist literacy[39]. James Paul Gee refers to it as the 'traditional' approach to literacy, and Brian Street puts it under the category of 'autonomous' literacy as against 'ideological' literacy. As a discourse, the traditional essayist literacy, according to James Paul Gee, 'is founded on the idea - often associated with 'modernism' as opposed to 'postmodernism' - 'of people transcending their social and cultural differences to communicate 'logically', 'rationally', and 'dispassionately' to each other as 'strangers' (the basic assumption behind the essay) in a thoroughly explicit and decontextualized way'[40]. Jürgen Habermas (1972) too has criticized this form of literacy and knowledge based on a 'technical-cognitive' interest as against 'practical' and 'emancipatory' interests[41]. In the name of objectivity, this type of 'technical-cognitive' interest, under 'positivist' influence, seeks to establish law-like regularities upon which predictions may be based. With the help of certain 'facts' and causal law-like theories, the essential aim of this type of cognitive interest is to establish a 'possible technical control' over things, processes and human behaviour.

Thus a 'curriculum guided by a technical interest implies a curriculum with an interest in *control*: control of the pupil so that at the end of the teaching process, the product (i.e. the pupil) will conform to the intentions expressed in the original objectives' - to control both the learning environment and the learner[42]. Much of this curriculum development takes place at sites away from classroom practices and enters the classroom as a fully-formed prescription. Within a prescriptive curriculum, language-texts function as a control device through emphasis on form, a fixed content and decontextualised presentation. Scollon and Scollon point out that the structuralist-essayist form of literacy first requires learning new discourse patterns. Discourse patterns, i.e. ways of using language for communication, whether in orality or writing differ in each culture, and they reflect particular reality sets or world views adopted by each culture. Scollon and Scollon

[38] Scollon and Scollon (1981), 49
[39] ibid.
[40] Gee (1996), 156-157
[41] Jürgen Habermas (1972), Knowledge and human interests, 308
[42] McKay and Romm (1992), 133

argue that the greatest cause of inter-ethnic or inter-group miscommunication lies in the area of 'understanding not *what* someone says but *why* he is saying it'[43]. 'Discourse patterns are among the strongest expressions of personal and cultural identity. The Scollons argue that changes in a person's discourse patterns - for example, in acquiring a new form of literacy - may involve (a conflicting) change in identity'[44].

Jacques Derrida too has characterised and criticised the Western tradition in print-literacy as being 'logocentric'. By "logocentric" he means that it is 'driven by a desire to establish human meaning through an anchoring of it in constructs and categories, which can be taken to "represent" an original reality. The representations in turn accrete to form the stable capital of culture, which then can be manipulated, taught, and disseminated as the pure sediment of a people's organised life'[45]. European "modernist" assumptions are now criticized on the 'basis of claims that all communication is rooted in sociocultural identities and based on shared knowledge and understandings. There is no such thing, in reality, as decontextualized communication - meaning is always a matter of contextualizing signs within shared mental models and social contexts'[46]. Today, the 'modernist' divide between the 'cognitive' and the 'emotive' is discarded, and the emphasis has shifted to a practically-informed, interactive and communicative curriculum and teaching-method which takes into account material interests, reason, emotion and social identity of learners[47].

Our theoretical perspective draws on some principal ideas of modern linguists. In America, Dell Hymes (1970) developed a theoretical definition of communicative competence as a native speaker's ability to produce and understand sentences which are appropriate to the socio-cultural context in which they occur. Competence, according to Dell Hymes, refers to general capabilities of a person which includes both a tacit knowledge of assumptions and rules of grammar, and their general use[48]. Language-use for Hymes is an intersubjective meaning-making activity, and it includes even those features which Chomsky excluded - 'memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic)' - because they too influence the overall meaning[49]. It was however the Chomskyan revolution which established the learner as

[43] Scollon and Scollon (1981), 12
[44] Gee (1996), 59 (words within bracket are mine)
[45] Jacques Derrida referred to in DG Smith (1992)
[46] Gee (1996), 157
[47] ibid.
[48] Srivastava (1995), 140
[49] Berns (1990), 30

central to the theory of language and literacy-learning: (a) 'a linguist's description of language should match the internalised grammar of native speakers'; (b) in language-use, development and learning, 'the whole is bigger than its parts', that is, 'the whole is always more than the sum total of the parts'[50]. Based on these shifts in theoretical emphasis in linguistics, Sandra Savignon considers language as a 'meaning-making' process, and as an aspect or mode of human behaviour. To "know" or "understand" a subject's behaviour or communication, is to know both how s/he uses a language for creating meaning as well as knowing various forms of a language-use. The goal of a language-teaching programme should be the development of the learner's communicative competence, which she defines as '*expression*, *interpretation*, and *negotiation* of meaning involving *interaction* between two or more persons or between one person and a written or oral text'[51]. The central features of Savignon's approach to the linguistic basis of communication and competence are associated with:

> (1) the dynamic, interpersonal nature of communicative competence and its dependence on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons who share to some degree the same symbolic system; (2) its application to both spoken and written language as well as to many other symbolic systems; (3) the role of context in determining a specific communicative competence, the infinite variety of situations in which communication takes place, and the dependence of success in a particular role on one's understanding of the context and on prior experience of a similar kind; and (4) communicative competence as a relative, not absolute, concept, one dependent on the cooperation of all participants, a situation which makes it reasonable to speak of degrees of communicative competence[52].

Four main components of communicative competence can be delineated here: (a) grammatical competence, (b) socio-linguistic competence, (c) discourse competence, and (d) strategic competence. Grammatical competence consists in knowledge of the sentence structure. Socio-linguistic competence is an ability to use language appropriately in a given context, where the roles of the participants, the setting and the purpose of interaction is clear. Discourse competence consists in the ability to recognise different patterns of expressions, to see sentences or utterances in terms of an overall theme or topic. Finally, strategic competence can be seen to compensate for imperfect knowledge and command in the use of the above mentioned linguistics skills. There is no hierarchical relationship between these components, but, according to Savignon, 'they are interdependent', and

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[50] Srivastava (1995), 122

[51] Berns (1990), 88-89; and Sandra Savignon (1983), Communicative Competence: Theory and classroom practice, 249

[52] Savignon (1983), 8-9; and Berns (1990), 89

'communicative competence is greater than any one single component'[53]. The curriculum she proposes differs considerably from the traditional approaches to language-teaching. Traditionally, language-teaching has usually been divided into writing, reading, speaking and listening stages but she proposes five areas for a curriculum, and fixes no sequence or hierarchy between them[54]. For example, one which appears to be related to adult learning is 'the affective aspects of language acquisition, the expression of one's own attitudes, values, and beliefs', ranging from acceptance to rejection of cross-cultural differences according to the learner's viewpoints[55]. Another important area or component of language-teaching curriculum is the elaboration of *Language Arts*, which focuses on rules of usage. Here, explanations for how a language works can be provided, but she points out that it may not be restricted in content to analysis alone. She also recommends systematic practice in the application of rules, including spelling tests, pronunciation and vocabulary expansion exercises. 'This component could be interpreted as focus on the textual function of language. It is here that grammar, in the traditional sense of focus on formal relationships, finds its place in language teaching'[56].

Apart from Savignon, Jürgen Habermas's ideas on communicative action and ideal or distorted speech situations appear to be relevant to our study[57]. Habermas developed his ideas on the basis of a critique of society, and primarily wanted to make literacy and language a tool for emancipation. He rejected Chomsky's somewhat passive notion of competence, and believed it to be inadequate on account of the gap between knowledge and action, and culturally determined interpretations and expressions of meaning[58]. Habermas's 'reconstruction of language goes beyond the capacity to produce or recognise grammatically correct utterances to a notion of *communicative* competence - the capacity to use such utterances competently in real-life situations. The rational reconstruction of speech asserts that such competence rests on a set of background assumptions of communication involving cognitive, moral and personal dimensions. These involve validity judgements about truth, appropriateness and authenticity of utterances and speakers'[59].

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[53] Berns (1990), 89-90
[54] For details, see Sandra Savignon (1983)
[55] see Berns (1990), 91
[56] Berns (1990), 89-91
[57] Jürgen Habermas (1970), 'Toward a theory of communicative competence', Inquiry, No. 13, 360-375
[58] Young (1989), 39; and Berns (1990), 97
[59] Young (1989), 39

Democracy can move 'beyond its present half-developed state if the level of institutionally permitted learning in society is allowed to be raised, technical questions distinguished from ethical-political ones and discursive rather than instructional or indoctrinatory learning processes allowed to take place'[60]. Its literacy prerequisite is general competence of the individual which extends beyond the mastery of the abstract system of linguistic rules. This includes skills which help every individual in situations of potential ordinary communication. For Habermas, communicative competence consists in the mastery of the ideal speech situation. 'When understood in terms of an ideal, communication is realized when the actual motivations of the hearer are identical with the linguistically apprehensible intentions of the speaker. Its prerequisite is an unhindered agreement between participants about the thematic and situational parameters, the inherent meaning relationships, and the social conventions appropriate to the context'[61]. We can also interpret communicative competence as an individual's ability to enter into dialogue or meaning-making with various participants or with a text, and in the ideal situation where statements, information, utterances are true, appropriate, sincere and comprehensible to all members. In non-identical discourse patterns or speech-situations, communicative activity involves discourse initiation, analyses, discussion and negotiation between participants, re-establishment of argument on basic principles, reaching a consensus, or resumption of communication. In the Habermasian scheme, it is only through discourse analyses and negotiation that change in a society can be initiated and the ideal of communication can be achieved between and among all members and groups in a society. Hence in his scheme of things, we also have concepts like communicative inequality and conflict between an ideal speech situation and various communication distortions and inhibitions which occur during actual socialisation and interaction processes. 'Realization of an ideal speech situation is dependent upon freedom from two types of hindrance: (1) external, contingent influences such as uneven distribution of power inherent in a given social structure, and (2) tensions which result from the structure of communication itself which might conceivably require repetitions, redundancies, or use of formulaic expressions at particular points in the speech situation'[62].

It is important to stress that in the Habermasian scheme, 'reason' or 'rationality' is not situated in any particular individual's view of reality, but rather in 'subject-subject'

[60] Young (1989), 42
[61] Berns (1990), 97
[62] Berns (1990), 98

relations which implies that 'knowledge' about reality can only be *intersubjectively* appropriated through discourse. 'Objective' reality is itself 'that which corresponds to the intersubjective agreement of a community of enquirers whose deliberations are conducted in accordance with shared standards of rationality'[63]. Thus an intersubjective dialogue is necessary through discourses so that the production of knowledge is democratic. It also requires reflexive consciousness which recognizes that conceptions of reality can always be contested. Like Habermas, Paulo Freire too suggests that 'dialogue' and 'critical reflection' are basic to 'participation', and instrumental in bringing about emancipatory social transformation[64]. Supported by practical experience and result, Freire believes that 'every human being, no matter how "ignorant" or submerged in the "culture of silence" he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others'[65]. Literacy consists in people acquiring and learning proper skills and tools which facilitate a dialogical encounter in order to perceive the reality around them, and to find out the contradictions exhibited by those realities, and also to be able to deal with them. 'Men educate each other through the mediation of the world', and in this process, they discover that they are also 'creators of culture'[66].

Freire's pedagogy is essentially a 'pedagogy of and for the oppressed', since this pedagogy consists in reflection and action on the causes of oppression, on the part of the oppressed[67]. He proposes a 'dialogical' and 'problem-posing' education based on critical and liberating dialogues as necessary for further action towards emancipation[68]. 'Problem-posing' education is essentially rooted in the 'essence of consciousness' or 'intentionality'. It rejects 'communiqués' and embodies 'communication'. 'It epitomizes the special characteristics of consciousness: being *conscious of*, not only as intent on objects but as turned in upon itself in a Jasperian "split" - consciousness as consciousness *of* consciousness'[69]. Further, a liberating education 'consists in acts of cognition' and not in 'transferals of informations'. The problem-posing method does not dichotomize the activity of learning as information transmission from the teacher to the student. The students are not docile listeners. Rather, in the Freirean scheme, they are 'critical co-investigators' in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to students

[63] W Carr and S Kemmis (1986), Becoming critical: education, knowledge and action research, 122 quoted in McKay and Romm (1992), 92
[64] Paulo Freire (1972), Pedagogy of the Oppressed
[65] see Foreword to Freire (1972), 12
[66] Freire, op.cit, 12-13
[67] op.cit., 25
[68] op.cit., 19, 41
[69] op.cit, 52-53

for their consideration, and re-examines his earlier considerations as the students express their own. According to Freire, 'the role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of *doxa* is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos*'[70]. A problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. It should strive for emergence of consciousness for a critical intervention towards reality. It enables people or pupils to develop their own power to perceive reality in a critical way. Critical thinking consists in seeing reality not as a static thing, but as a reality in an active process, in transformation. Tools which help to perceive this reality are language, communication and dialogue. In other words, it is the *word*. According to Freire, 'within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed - even in part - the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis'[71]. Thus to speak a word necessarily implies a relation with the world. Here, Freire has brought out one more significant point. He says that those who through reflection perceive the inappropriateness of a particular form of action, and feel that it should be postponed or substituted, cannot be accused of inaction. For Freire, critical reflection is also action. He has pointed out that 'there is *no dichotomy by which praxis can be divided into a prior stage of reflection and a subsequent stage of action - action and reflection occur simultaneously*'[72]. The notion of action-reflection also implies that decision-making processes are made democratically accountable; this is possible only through dialogue in society.

Freire views dialogue as a praxis with which people transform the world. 'Faith in man is an *a priori* requirement for dialogue; the "dialogical man" believes in other man even before he meets them face to face. ... Without this faith in man, dialogue is farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation'[73]. Although faith in human beings is an *a priori* condition of dialogue, it is dialogue which also helps establish trust between two or more interacting persons or groups. Trust as an aspect of adult pedagogy is more important to our analysis where the majority of adults are alienated from the government, the state, its institutions, and the elites who control these institutions. 'Trust is contingent on the evidence which one party provides the others of his true, concrete intentions; it cannot exist if that party's words do not coincide with his actions'[74]. If

[70] op.cit., 54
[71] op.cit., 60
[72] McKay and Romm (1992), 96 (emphasis original)
[73] Freire (1972), 63-64
[74] ibid.

dialogue between two persons or groups fails, or if miscommunication occurs, it shows that the preconditions of such a mutual trust were lacking. A situation where dialogue is absent is most likely linked to conditions of oppression. Imposed silence and passivity may deny people 'conditions' which are appropriate to the opening and raising of consciousness. Here Freire introduces the idea of 'conscientisation' - a process by which 'people are made conscious of their potential to participate in the construction of interpretations about the world'[75]. Thus an authentic education 'is not carried on by A *for* B or by A *about* B, but rather A *with* B, mediated by the world - a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it. These views, impregnated with anxieties, doubts, hopes, or hopelessness, imply significant themes on the basis of which the programme content of education can be built'[76].

The pedagogy outlined above does not romantically celebrate the adult learner's or student's experience just for the heck of it. Rather, this pedagogy is based on a critically affirmative language, and advocates that educators must work constantly on both their own and the experiences of learners. This pedagogy in situations of classroom or textbook interaction requires that we democratise language-teaching and break down the elitist mould or paternalistic barriers to the development of the communicative competence of all learners. According to Hans-Eberhard Piepho, communicative competence is 'the ability to make oneself understood, without hesitation and inhibitions, by linguistic means which the individual comprehends and has learned to assess in terms of their effects, and the ability to comprehend communicative intentions even when they are expressed in a code which the speaker him or herself does not yet know well enough to use and is only partially available in his her own idiolect'[77]. This definition takes note of the learner's hesitations, inhibitions and prejudices. The distribution of political and economic power, the distinction between communication and discourse, and the potential role of language to understand and change society, are implicitly the important elements of Piepho's approach to communicative language-teaching. 'The ultimate aim of this approach is to empower language users through language and thus enable them to participate in the sharing of social and political responsibility'[78]. In a classroom situation, this means that learners have both the power and opportunity to express themselves in terms of utterances, to say, for example, 'I do not like that story or argument'. The learners should also be given the means and skills to justify

[75] McKay and Romm (1992), 98
[76] Freire (1972), 66
[77] Piepho (1974, 1979) quoted in Berns (1990), 97
[78] Berns (1990), 99

their position or argument. Here, self-expression becomes vital to language-learning and articulation, and to unrestricted communication, which in turn would make demands on the linguistic resources available to learners. This is more possible when the organisation of the 'content' of teaching-materials and other activities is related to familiar interactive situations. Piepho takes a different stand from Habermas in the priority given to communication. In Piepho's case, the main objective of teaching and learning is not the attainment of the ideal situation. 'Rather, it is development of learner's ability to cope with the real situation, which is usually far from ideal. ... Learners also have to be prepared to deal with the manifestations of diversity which can hinder communication'[79].

It is generally found that a variety of social stereotypes continue to be represented in language teaching materials of mainstream school curriculum. For example, women generally appear as 'mummies' cooking in the kitchen and men appear as 'daddies' going to work; boys play football and girls play with 'Barbie' dolls; tribals are depicted as homeless wanderers, 'illiterates', unhygenic, foolish and quarrelsome, etc. To correct these representations in stereotypes, Piepho suggests that we change the orientation of language-teaching texts in two ways: the first is to analyse closely the roles and relationship behind each form of human behaviour depicted in a narrative, particularly the relationships between men and women, children and parents, between common villagers and the elites. The second is to present 'texts' only as opinions and points of view, rather than as facts[80]. Although communicative teaching is generally associated with functional syllabuses, by making it critical and dialogical, it can also be made socially and culturally responsive. As opposed to a monolithic view of communicative language-teaching, language-texts should be used for a variety of purposes and contexts, to meet the needs of the learner's self-expression, articulation, interpretation and negotiation of meaning. It requires 'an orientation toward language based on a set of assumptions which are radically different from the formalistic views of the structuralist period of influence or the dominant generative model'[81].

We can now summarize the following characteristics of a communicative and interactive language pedagogy: (a) Language-teaching should be based on a view of language as communication. Based on an interactive-communication perspective, the Eklavya group's language-teaching programme among rural tribals of Madhya Pradesh in

[79] Berns (1990), 100
[80] op.cit., 101
[81] op.cit., 104

central India accepts that 'no language is inherently superior or inferior and that the question of the prestige and status of a language was essentially a socio-political and not a linguistic question. Linguistically speaking, all languages were equally systematic and rule-governed and could potentially be used for all literary and scientific activities'[82]. (b) Diversity must be recognised and accepted as part of language development; its use and development must be in line with experiences in the individual's first language. All efforts should be made to sensitize teachers to linguistic variability, and to the idea that multilingualism is an asset rather than a disadvantage. (c) Learners' competence must be considered relative, and not absolute in terms of correctness. (d) More than one variety of language and speech norm should be recognised as viable models for learning and teaching. (e) Culture and identity must be recognised as playing a central and instrumental role in shaping communicative competence, both in the first and subsequent languages. (f) No single methodology or fixed set of techniques should be prescribed. (g) Language must be used to serve ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions, so that each is focused towards the development of learner's competence. The ideational function refers to the meaning potential or ideas inherent in an expression of a speaker or a writer. The interpersonal function may be referred to the social relationships embedded in a text, and the textual function refers to structural realizations of the ideational and the interpersonal, in terms of text-constructs, connected passages of discourse as distinct from a random set of sentences[83]. Finally, (h) texts should be presented in such a way that learners feel engaged in doing, speaking, and discussing things in their language, on a text, in their own ways. These features which are central to Eklavya's, Savignon's and Piepho's approaches to language-teaching, despite their very different contexts, are based on both face-to-face as well as reader-text interaction.

One may now distinguish child learning from adult learning of a language. In schools children are taught language skills as completely new skills through text-bound strategies mediated by an adult teacher. Children pick up and learn new skills quickly because they are intellectually still in their formative stages. Moreover, children are generally socialised to accept new information or rules as perceived by adults. The better the children are socialized in making critical judgement about a given statement, the better are the chances of their becoming intelligent enquirers. The learning situation of adults is very different. Adult learners are already in possession of ideas and skills in at least one

[82] For details see PRASHIKA (1994), 59
[83] For details see Berns (1990), 15-16

language, i.e. their mother-tongue. They are also in possession of some linguistic and discursive skills in other languages in an informal, multilingual or bilingual setting. In a formal setting, adult learners 'first tend to link patterns in print with patterns in oral language as sense groups. They also tend to draw information from other communication contexts'[84]. What adults learn is generally from the communication available to them in various discursive encounters of everyday interaction. It is the little narratives with which adults constantly characterise themselves and the world around them[85]. The reality is realized in small bits of numerous conversations and textual meanings encountered by adults in narratives and discourses. Whatever adult learners learn to speak, think, read and write, is always related to their identity - both as individuals and as a social group. It is not just what TLC texts say that is important but also how these things are said, how certain messages are expressed both in everyday interactions and in their reading materials. This we have already referred to as discourse pattern. James Gee writes:

> A Discourse, then, is composed of ways of talking, listening, (often, too, reading and writing), acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and using tools and objects, in particular settings at specific times, so as to display and recognize a particular social identity. Discourse creates 'social positions' (perspectives) from which people are 'invited' ('summoned') to speak, listen, act, read and write, think, feel, believe and value in certain characteristic, historically recognizable ways, combined with their own individual styles and creativity[86].

Discourses are about what one says and thinks, but more particularly about what one speaks, when, and with what authority. Thus discourses are 'accepted as instantiations of particular roles (or 'types of people') by specific *groups of people'*, whether families of a certain type, students of such-and-such a background, teachers of such-and-such persuasion, minorities of a certain type, graduates of a particular university, migrant workers of a particular region, etc.[87] Language and literacy make no sense outside a discourse. A discourse always relates in a particular way to different persons, groups, their place, time and social practices of which their utterance is a part. It is this shared aspect of communication between two or more persons, not just grammatically correct speech, which makes sense in a discourse. What matters is the 'right' expression at the 'right' time, the 'right' place and the 'right' manner. Thus a 'discourse-centred' approach to various

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[84] Srivastava (1995), 119

[85] A narrative has two parts: a story and a discourse. 'The story is the content, or chain of events. The story is the 'what' in a narrative, the discourse is the 'how'. The discourse is rather like a plot, how the reader becomes aware of what happened, the order of the appearance of the events'. Thus a narrative is also a form of communication as it presupposes two ends, a sender and a receiver. See Sarup (1996), 17

[86] Gee, op.cit., 128

[87] op.cit., viii

modes of communication, language and literacy development requires us to pay attention to every positioned speaker and actor in such a development process, and to their relationship with culture as a system of shared, contested and negotiated meanings. There exists a plurality (not an infinity) of meanings or readings of any given text, utterance or a practice. In this sense TLC practices too carry a plurality of meanings and identity for their subject learners. Hence in this study, we will analyse TLC practices, their textual and interactional language, as examples of sites where a particular sort of discourse operates to integrate, socialise and classify the large majority of adult learners.

In every sort of daily interaction, TLC practices and discourses can be seen to produce a specific type of language with recurring themes, utterances, words, values and beliefs. It is these recurring themes and utterances that define an individual subject, i.e. adult learners. This may be called 'labelling'. Labelling is one of the most important elements of identity construction. People attach certain labels to others, and the labels often, though not always, begin to have an effect. For example, the way people interact, talk, listen, or read and write, involves learning and use of a specific language. A specific type of language-use connotes a particular type of identity, often defined in India in terms of being 'literate' or 'illiterate', English educated or '*desi*' (vernacular), '*dehati*' (rural) or '*shahari*' (urban), '*babu*' (a pen-pusher) or '*saheb*' (boss), 'backward' and 'forward', etc. All of these signify particular social identities. It is not only the simple act of labelling but also events or actions interpreted retroactively which produce identity-types. Whatever a particular social identity may denote, there is always a struggle and negotiation over the appropriate making of such identities. 'Identity has a history. At one time it was taken for granted that a person had a 'given' identity. The debates around it today assume that identity is not an inherent quality of a person but that it arises in interaction with others and the focus is on the processes by which identity is constructed' and negotiated[88].

Not all utterances or discourses represent consistent and compatible values. We sometimes perform as members of more than one or two discourses, where each discourse involves one of many identities. All discourses constantly negotiate and/or reproduce a given perspective or identity, though for some the conflicts and negotiations may be more dramatic than others. For example, the conflict between home-based discourses and school-based discourses is so deep and apparent among the Santhali tribal children of Dumka district in Bihar that the majority prefer not to go to schools. Indeed, the values of the mainstream Hindi-medium schools and their discourses treat the tribal population as

[88] Sarup (1996), 14

'other', as inferior people. In becoming full members of mainstream school discourses, tribal children run the risk of becoming complicit with values that denigrate and damage their home-based discourses and identity. These conflicts, though mostly passive, are very common and real and are one of the sites of tribal struggle and resistance. This conflict and negotiation over appropriate identity spreads to larger interactional discourses of schools, language, culture, region and nation.

Identity for Dumka tribals connotes a sense of 'who we are' in terms of material, linguistic and cultural history which is different from non-tribals in Dumka and neighbouring districts. Literacy expansion is thus very much related to interactive discursive practices through which diverse information is received and, some sorts of social identities are formed and transformed through history. Identity is a subjective agency created by social experiences, and mediated by language through which people think, understand and express aspects of their lives and interests. Identity is a process which goes in hand with language acquisition and literate (rational) thinking. In fact, in Lacanian terms, language acquisition is the central process whereby subjectivity is produced. 'It is the entry into language which is a precondition for becoming conscious or aware of oneself as a distinct entity. This process simultaneously founds the unconscious. As language is a social system, Jacques Lacan is able to assert that the social enters into the formation of the unconscious'[89]. This brings us back to the Scollons' argument that acquiring new forms of literacy or discourse patterns, as in the case of the TLC's subjects, i.e. tribal or rural peasant adult learners, may involve not only a change but also a conflict in identity. 'One cannot practice a skill one has not been exposed to, cannot engage in a social practice one has not been socialized into' but 'most non-mainstream children are expected to do so in schools'[90].

If literacy consists in communicative competence and control of both the written and the oral medium, James Paul Gee has argued that its acquisition primarily and initially depends on primary discourse, e.g., family or home based discourses in the mother-tongue. 'Primary Discourses are those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings. Primary Discourses constitute our first social identity, and something of a base within which we acquire or resist later Discourses. They form our initial, taken-for-granted understandings of *who* we are and *who* people "like us" are, as well as what sorts of things

[89] op.cit., 34
[90] Gee, op.cit., 65

we ("people like us") do, value, and believe when we are not "in public" '[91]. It is primary discourses in the first language that form the basis for any further learning in either a second language or in secondary discourses. 'Secondary Discourses are those to which people are apprenticed as part of their socializations within various local, state, and national groups and institutions outside early home and peer-group socialization' - for example, schools, clubs, offices, public meetings[92]. Secondary discourses define the recognizability and meaningfulness of our more public roles and formal acts. In a multilingual and plural society like India, community-based discourses have links to, and applications in, spheres beyond the local community. These discourses are now increasingly characterised as more global in terms of public sphere linkages[93]. The relationship between local community-based discourses and more public-sphere-based secondary discourses is that of a contested site on a continuum, rather than a clear dichotomy. However, the key point is that it is the identity-image and linguistic similarity or differences between primary and secondary discourses which affect the differential outcome of language learning for a particular learner. These differentials can either facilitate or interfere with one's acquisition and learning process. Discourses like languages affect acquisition and learning but at times, when two people or groups speak from different planes without any common ground for meeting, there is a complete break in the learning process. It allows a gap or a chasm to form in communication between 'what is conveyed' and 'what is learnt'. If literacy primers given to adult learners use a different language and a different attitude (discourse), or if they have no common grounds of communication, then it is hardly surprising that learners will find it difficult to actively engage with the text.

3. RATIONALE BEHIND THIS PROJECT

The problem of 'illiteracy' shamefully and tragically persists in India despite all Government rhetoric. A standard set of reasons for its persistence are repeatedly put forward by the Government and its agencies and committees (see Chapter 3). Most of these reasons pertain to implementation variables[94]. In our view, however, past failures have not

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[91] op.cit., 137-141

[92] ibid.

[93] see Appadurai and Breckenridge, 'Public Modernity in India' in C.A. Breckenridge (ed.) (1995), Consuming Modernity, 1 and 5

[94] National literacy mission - 1988, DAE, D/O Education (GOI), 13. Most of these failures pertain to weak implementation or non-implementation such as (a) poor training of instructors, (b) misreporting and lack of a credible monitoring system, (c) lack of administrative and political will, (d) irregular attendance, etc.

been analysed comprehensively by the Government and the reasons mainly lie somewhere else. School education and literacy programmes in India do not appear to have taken into consideration the socio-cultural matrix and language ecology which is specific to the network of communication of the Indian masses. Educators, researchers and, particularly, policy-makers in India have done little work on the subject of mass literacy, identity and language, though a few essays and articles have been published recently[95]. There have been two main detailed works on earlier adult education programmes launched in India before 1988, namely, S.Y. Shah and Ila J. Patel[96]. Shah's work is in the nature of a documentary commentary on previous adult education programmes in Bihar, and contains little analysis. Patel's work is a case study of non-formal education in Gujarat seen in the light of a purely political economy approach. Apart from these two, Krishna Kumar and Satish Saberwal have done some rigorous historical analysis of growth of mass education and public literacy in India[97]. Both Kumar and Saberwal have given us historical accounts of the growth of literacy and education in terms of the development of ideas, social and cultural practices and institutions, and imperial and exogenous influences on India. The substance of their research has been mainly historical. The analysis is rigorous, but they give us only a broad general idea of the more contemporary situation. Krishna Kumar has done an interesting comparative case study of school and adult literacy primers of India and Canada, published during the earlier decades. His emphasis is mainly on the ideological content of educational textbooks and primers he had selected. His approach, though still relevant, is not oriented to the analysis of communicative competence and language forms. R.N. Srivastava has done some interesting work from an applied linguistic perspective, mainly related to the general growth of literacy in the Hindi-speaking region. His works are mainly in the form of collection of previously published essays. Though really interesting and useful from a linguistic perspective, they do not integrate the arguments with social science research. In India, scholarly attention to properties of praxis, identity politics and discourse studies are limited to disciplines like history, political science and sociology. They have not received much attention in the area of educational debate and related fields like culture, language and literacy practices.

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[95] These are: Krishna Kumar (1993) EPW ; R.N. Srivastava (1993); Denzil Saldanha (1995) (1989) EPW ; RK Agnihotri (1994); Sumanta Banerjee (1993) (1994) EPW ; Sadhna Saxena (1993) EPW ; Anita Dighe (1995) Occasional Papers , (1995) EPW ;

[96] S.Y. Shah (1989), Adult Education in Bihar, and Ila J. Patel (1988), Policies and Practice of Rural nonformal education in India 1947-85, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation

[97] Krishna Kumar (1989), Social character of learning, Krishna Kumar (1991), Political Agenda of Education- A study of colonialist and nationalist ideas ; Satish Saberwal (1995)

Outside India, most scholars have generally concerned themselves either with purely theoretical dimensions of literacy[98], or with the history of changing patterns of literacy use[99], or the growth of literacy and development in the context of the Western world[100]. Some recent studies have concentrated on a general ethnography of literacy in terms of reading practices related to major religious and cultural texts.[101] Most of these writings have concentrated on the issue of standard literacy in a dominant language, for example, English. Their discussion is restricted to themes, perspectives, symbols and processes which relate to the discourse of the dominant language, both through the texts used either in schools or outside, for example, literary and religious texts. Hardly any mention is made of local discursive themes and languages in mass literacy programmes. A few essays[102] have analysed national literacy campaigns. However, they have mainly dealt with issues of centralised policy and mobilisation mechanisms adopted in some countries during the 1970s. Though important, these fail to provide any clue as to the intricate relationship between identity, language and a self-sustaining participatory culture. Some like J.P. Parry and Katherine Gough have studied literacy growth in India in cultural and religious terms[103]. They have raised some issues by providing new interpretations of social and institutional practices towards an ethnography of culture and literacy in India but their perspective is anthropologically, what Derrida calls 'logocentric', as mentioned earlier. Our perspective is developed through a critical elaboration of ideas found in several educational social theorist as mentioned earlier. Here in this project, we endeavour to develop further comprehensive perspective, both at the micro and the macro levels, through case-studies of total literacy campaigns in villages and mass literacy in India.

4. LITERACY : SOME ISSUES

Academic disciplines do not create their fields of significance, they only legitimize particular organizations of meaning. They filter and rank and, in that sense, they truly discipline contested arguments and themes. In doing so, 'they continuously expand, restrict, or modify in diverse ways their arsenals of tropes, the types of statements they

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[98] see for example, J. Oxenham (1980), Literacy: Writing, Reading and Social Organisation ; Walter J. Ong (1982), Orality and Literacy

[99] see for example, Harvey J. Graff (1982), Literacy and Social Development in the West ; Robert Pattisson (1982), On Literacy: The Politics of the Word from Homer to the Age of Rock

[100] see Carlo M. Cipolla (1969), Literacy and Development in the West

[101] see Jonathan Boyarin (ed.) (1987), the Ethnography of Reading

[102] see Arnove and Graff (eds.) (1987), National Literacy Campaigns

[103] J.P. Parry, 'The Brahminical tradition and the technology of intellect' in Joanna Overring (ed.) (1985), Reason and Morality ; Kathleen Gough, 'Literacy in Kerela' in J. Goody (ed.) (1968)

deem acceptable. But the poetics and politics of the "slots" within which disciplines operate do not dictate the enunciative relevance of these slots'[104]. Modern modes of enquiry into the world of human knowledge have been characterized by what can be called a 'disciplinary mode'. Indeed, modern disciplines have been endowed with essential meanings and have acted as complete, self-sufficient explanations for the subjects of enquiry. Though they have provided explanations on one or two dimensions with the help of a range of perspectives, their disciplinary boundary still makes them blind to external suggestions and other possible relations or dimensions which may have some bearing on their study[105]. So the first significant issue concerning literacy is that for a representative account we should transcend the constraints of disciplinary boundaries and make our efforts more inter-disciplinary.

Secondly, for initiating literacy-learning among the subordinate or marginalised 'oral' groups who have never used writing, Paulo Freire has stressed the importance of what he calls 'meaningful thematics' or 'generative themes'[106]. A 'generative theme' is an issue or a persistent theme, about which people within a community or group have strong feelings that can generate their interest for deliberation and action. Freire writes: 'I have termed these themes generative because (however they are comprehended and whatever action they may evoke) they contain the possibility of unfolding into again as many themes, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled'[107]. For Freire, in understanding the 'generative themes' of a particular community, one is not engaged in a hypothesis-testing exercise. He writes: 'The concept of a generative theme is neither an arbitrary invention nor a working hypothesis that has to be proved. If it were a hypothesis to be proved, the initial investigation would seek not to ascertain the nature of the theme, but rather the very existence or non-existence of themes themselves. In that event, before attempting to understand the theme in its richness, its significance, its plurality, its transformations ... and its historical composition, we would first have to verify whether or not it is an objective fact; only then could we proceed to apprehend it'[108]. The exercise in discussion of a 'generative theme' involves a 'description of the situation'. Freire further tells us: '...the process of searching for meaningful thematics should include a concern for the links between themes, a concern to pose these problems as problems, and a concern for

[104] Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1991), 'Anthropology and the savage slot: the poetics and politics of otherness', in R.G. Fox (ed.) Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present
[105] Clifford Geertz (1983), 'Towards an ethnography of modern thought', in his book, Local Knowledge
[106] see Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972)
[107] op.cit, 74
[108] op.cit., 69

their historical-cultural context'[109]. For example, famine, seasonal draught and fraudulent moneylenders are serious concerns for the Dumka tribals. Hence a discussion on how to counter the menace of moneylenders, a 'generative theme' about which tribal adult learners can think and speak initially through their feelings, can be demonstrated to learn coherent, articulate and effective thinking. This can be done by summarizing their discussion, prioritizing and sequencing various statements on the situation and the difficulties, problems, obstacles and contradictions which people report. This exercise in code mixing and contrasts in expression, both through speech and writing, can become the basis of a self-sustaining literacy training. However, the investigation of people's thematic universe cannot stop only at the description of themes such as health, education, employment, literacy training, identity and the discovery of their essential linkages. According to Freire, it must inaugurate a dialogue on education and literacy practices as a practice of freedom. The methodology of the main investigation must likewise be dialogical, providing the opportunity both to discover generative themes and to stimulate people's awareness in regard to these themes. Consistent with the liberating purpose of dialogical education, the object of investigation is not men, but rather the thought-language men use to refer to reality, and their view of the world, which is the source of their generative themes.[110] In the Freirean scheme, the people whose thematic universe the TLC officials and volunteers should try to understand are not to be treated as objects of investigation. Rather, the people should be treated as 'co-investigators'. Such an exercise ultimately leads to cultural action for freedom on the part of both the local adult educator and the adult learners.

Prior to Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas, M.K. Gandhi and John Dewey were other great thinkers early this century who believed that democratic action for freedom was necessary for the growth of a plural, self-dependent and autonomous community consisting of a literate public. The common thing between Gandhi, Dewey, Freire and Habermas is that they are all concerned with the legitimacy crisis of the socio-political structure, with exploitation and violence as well as our ideological self-deceptions and the tyranny of dogmatic beliefs. All the four seek to reclaim through mass literacy the freedom and autonomy of the individual from the technocrats of social power. The only major difference between Gandhi and Freire on the one hand, and Habermas and Dewey on the other, is that the former's '*satyagraha*' and 'conscientization' are based not only on 'reason' but also 'love' and 'suffering' for others, whereas the latter's 'ethical' and

[109] op.cit., 80
[110] op.cit., 69

'practical' discourses are based on communicative competence and the force of a reasoned dialogue. Gandhi saw the purpose of mass education and literacy mainly in terms of training of the 3Hs - i.e. the hands (all education to begin with training in craft-based basic skills), the heart (training of the individual character), and the head (training of mind - ethics, reason, scientific temper and speech skills). Gandhi's educational philosophy also contains political elements in it as he equally emphasises on critical and shared knowledge as the basis for further development and as the basis of social organization. However, unlike Dewey, Freire and Habermas, he does not make education purely political. In the context of Indian tradition and its social language of mass consciousness, he preferred to make the political more educational rather than the educational more political. Gandhi will be discussed later in Chapter Two. We shall add here a few relevant ideas from John Dewey.

In Dewey's view, the theoretical connection between democracy and education was only superficially explained. This superficiality was evident in the explanation that 'popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and obey their governors are educated'[111]. The basis of democratic society was of course not any external authority but internal submission, 'voluntary disposition and interest'. Education was in reality supposed to create this internal discipline. However, Dewey argued that the true basis of democracy is that it 'is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience'[112]. Dewey argued further that education was not supposed to serve this purpose, though it might be performing this function unintendedly to an extent. Education had become an instrument serving the needs of nation-states rather than helping the individual. Maintenance of national sovereignty required 'subordination of individuals to the superior interests of the state both in military defense and in struggles for international supremacy in commerce, social efficiency was understood to imply a like subordination[113]. Disciplinary training rather than individual development was one of the most important functions of education. Thus the state's main function was assumed to be to educate individuals for the state, which in practice meant that people should accept state/public education based on a narrow, nationalistic curriculum. For John Dewey, the conflict between nationalism and elite-technocratic rule on the one hand, and open public communication on the other, was a difficult one to resolve. The only way out was 'the

[111] John Dewey, Democracy and Education (1916, reprinted 1944), 87
[112] ibid.
[113] Dewey, op.cit., 94

improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion'[114]. This improvement initially depends 'essentially upon freeing and perfecting the processes of enquiry'; as he further writes: our 'capacities are limited by the objects and tools at hand. They are still more dependent upon the prevailing habits of attention and interest which are set by tradition and institutional customs. Meanings run in the channels formed by instrumentalities of which, in the end, language, the vehicle of thought as well as communication, is the most important'[115].

5. FIELD-STUDY: APPROACHES AND METHODS

To test our central hypothesis in this project, we have to assess the impact of day-to-day local interaction of language and identity, and the critical and common-sensical discursive practices on literacy needs, social and cultural change in the two TLC villages of our case study in Bihar and Haryana. Secondly, we have to assess the importance of forces, phenomena, institutions, values, pedagogical principles, approaches and models external to the local public or shared life. The first part of our enquiry will be done by way of a descriptive yet analytical and comparative study of modern history, coupled with some ethnography of social, cultural and educational development in Bihar and Haryana. The second part of our enquiry will try to assess the impact of TLC practices in two villages, and the impact it has had on peoples' motivation or disaffection towards reading and writing. The general approach in understanding the life of adult learners will be a descriptive one.

An ethnographic case study 'is neither an objective realist nor subjective imaginative account. Rather, it is a historical artifact that is mediated by elaborated distancing of culturally embedded and internally contradictory (but seemingly independent and coherent) concepts that take on a life of their own as "theory".'[116] This study therefore, is a theoretically structured story concentrating on both the ordinary people and the governing elite's understanding of the need for, and the role of, literacy. In an ethnographic study, an ethnographer uses a holistic perspective to describe the broad context and patterns of life to understand how the parts and pieces of culture relate to the "whole". Nevertheless, while ethnographers are concerned with the "whole", they may elect to take a more "focused" look at particular aspects or element of everyday life. It may show the

[114] John Dewey, The Public and its problems (1927, reprinted 1954), 208
[115] Dewey (1927), 208-210
[116] Philip Wexler, Becoming Somebody (1992), 6

ways in which contacts among members are initiated, the range of literacy options available, the ways in which literacy is used to define group membership, the ways in which younger members of the culture acquire knowledge of the cultural patterns and expectations of daily life, and the types and functions of speech events[117]. Since our entire study is 'topic-oriented' and 'language-centered' as against comprehensive, broad, societal-level explorations of cultural patterns, it will be a close examination of particular aspects, of the ways people think and constitute themselves through a (TLC) task group.

Our field study into the literacy practices of the TLC group will focus on both formal and informal situations involving use of linguistic skills in writing, speaking and reading. It will analyse and deconstruct the meanings which are entailed in the interactional language of such group practices. The theoretical structure of our study does not precede the survey and its observation, in the sense that it would be fitting conclusion to the data or field-notes collected from the field. Some insights of academic research will guide us throughout but, they too will be tested against observations.

5.1 THE FIELD-VISIT : SURVEY DESIGN

In this study, we were not concerned with a 'quantitative' analysis of TLC operations. We were mainly interested in an analysis of the way TLC as an idea has been conceptualised and put into practice to yield its declared objective, which consists in institutionalizing a long-term, self-sustainable and participatory 'learning' society, and to find out to what extent this is possible to achieve. Secondly, we chose the Hindi region because it is educationally and economically the most backward region, with the highest 'illiteracy' indexes and yet it presents a contrast which is striking. The BIMARU (a pun on the Hindi word for 'sick' but standing for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and UP) Hindi-speaking states are the worst off in terms of development. Bihar, our first choice for the study, has the highest male 'illiteracy', crime and corruption, and is amongst the most poverty-stricken states. Haryana, our second choice, on the other hand is economically one of the richest states and though educational and cultural backwardness is more or less the same as in other Hindi-speaking states, the official media does not recognise it as a 'sick' state. For a comparative study of educational and literacy situation in the two states, our choice for the field-study was also driven by a consideration of linguistic and cognitive familiarity with this region.

[117] Amy Zaharlick and Judith L Green (1991), 205-225

My field-visit started in late October 1994 and ended in early April 1995. Since New Delhi is the centre of all TLC initiative and control, I started my work there. I contacted every possible office, academic and media person who was concerned with the TLC operation either as observer or as participant. Structured and unstructured interviews and discussions and collection of information and reports from various sources were done during the first few weeks. I then moved to Patna, the state-capital of Bihar. In Patna, I collected information and opinions about the TLC. In Patna, it was finally decided that Dumka would be the best choice for our case-study for various reasons: (a) it was the only tribal district which had taken up the TLC project; (b) it was reported to be successful; and finally (c) educationally and economically, the tribals are the most backward community in Bihar. It was decided that I visit two other successful districts for my own research interest and satisfaction. One is Dhanbad, which was still undergoing preparatory stages in some pockets, and the other is Madhubani, which had already completed the full phase of TLC, and was supposedly entering into the second stage of post-literacy. Thus in November 1994 I spent about three-four weeks there visiting several villages and Blocks in Dumka. Nawadih village in Jama block became our main target of investigation because it was soon going to be officially declared as 'totally literate'. I visited Dhanbad and Madhubani districts for two weeks each. In all these visits I got many chances to see and observe each and every aspect of TLC implementation. After completing the visit of TLC villages, I finally returned to Patna around mid January 1995 to have feedback discussion with authorities and other concerned scholars. Likewise I visited three districts in Haryana, namely Rohtak, Panipat and Yamunanagar during the months of February and March 1995. Deshalpur village in Rohtak district was our main case-study for similar reasons of being declared as the 'first totally literate village' in Haryana. The distribution of time was the same as in Bihar. Everywhere I was accompanied by one or two local volunteer teachers (VT) who briefed me on general events. Central to our investigation were learners and the volunteer teachers with whom I had longer hours of discussion and interaction. Finally, my visit ended in New Delhi again for a feedback discussion and interview with key officials and academic observers.

We gathered data from all possible sources from the TLC villages and districts. Both successful and unsuccessful villages were visited in these districts. These data are used here only to support our argument. Our survey addressed all the actors involved in the campaign -- learners, instructors, organisers and the 'key players', the bureaucrats. The investigations were both 'text' and 'context' dependent. The aim of the survey was to

ascertain: (a) what is the nature of the reception of any state-sponsored literacy project? (b) has it really helped the individual learner to become linguistically more competent and proficient in the kind of literacy it fosters? (c) does learning to read and write help the individuals to enrich and stabilise their common-sense and enable them to articulate their feelings about lived experiences, or does it implicitly seek to construct and confer a particular identity in terms of distinctions like educated, illiterate and semi-literate on the individuals in order to co-opt them into the established order through a form of subordinate literacy? We looked at the specific aspects of TLC organisation, participation, and the task-culture it has created. We began our enquiry with questions as to how contacts among members are initiated, what kind of relationships are established between members, whether those relationships are dialogical or authoritative, what opportunities are available to them in decision-making or in classroom discussion, in what ways the officials and educators use the language of interaction and instruction to address the motivation and interest of learners, how the language used both in general discourse and classroom discourse affects their identity and learning interest, and the ways in which they have acquired knowledge about a task, its organisation and aims.

The field work consisted of an interactive cycle of enquiry in which questions formulated at the outset were refined and reformulated as the unfolding patterns of conversation became visible[118]. Our investigation began with formal and informal interviews, discussions and conversations to learn whether the initial patterns and impressions, the etic perspective, reflected those of the members of the group, the emic perspective. In a whole series of accounts and explanations given by each respondent we could use their perspectives in contrasting ways. If the respondent's perspective and our own matched, then we could be reasonably sure that our field accounts had some value as knowledge of their group culture and could be used for an analytical understanding of their group activity. If the perspectives did not match, additional information had to be sought in order to verify the meaning of a particular statement or utterance, to uncover whether there were different perspectives or whether the analysis was inaccurate or incomplete. A lack of match does not necessarily and automatically invalidate our interpretation, since some

[118] For our fieldwork, we had a set of questions related to our investigation. Though not an exhaustive list, these questions were prepared with the help of sample questionnaires given to me by Professor Brian Street of Sussex University. The sample was helpful, as questions in it were related an ESRC Project (in UK) titled 'Literacy Practices and the Mass-Observation'. We had to reformulate these questions in the Indian context. In general, these questions were intended to be open ended. In the light of people's eagerness to respond and difficulty in understanding some of these questions, we found them to be more than adequate. Though some of respondents were willing to converse on a whole range of issues concerning them as a task group, none of them were in fact too happy and willing to go by whole set. The Questionnaire is given in Appendix 2.

aspects of the group or the culture are available to members only in a tacit way. In addition, no single member of a group or a culture 'holds' all the knowledge. We can have access to all the aspects of a group's culture only through interaction with all members. This knowledge has to be extracted from different members of the group, from women, men, instructors, learners, administrators, public figures and leaders. Our task in this case study was to find the 'cultural grammar' of the everyday interactional language of the TLC task group. The description thus obtained is merely one type of description and not 'the' description.

6. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One, Introduction, tries to develop a theoretical perspective on language and literacy. It also discusses the survey design and methodologies used for our case studies taken up in chapters Four and Five. Chapter Two is a study of the development of modern education and nationalist thinking on the role of education and literacy in India. Chapter Three is an analysis of the development of public policy goals on education and literacy in independent India. These two chapters trace the development of national understanding on the nature and role of education in nation-building. Here the discussion is centred more in the context of the Hindi-speaking states of north India in order to find out why the highest 'illiteracy' exists in these states and how adequately our educational planners have addressed these problems. Chapters Four and Five are case studies of two TLC villages in the Hindi speaking states of Bihar and Haryana. These two case studies are based on an ethnographic approach to literacy practices, participatory culture, psychological motivation and learning outcomes of the TLC task groups. Chapter Six examines the language and content of the TLC Primers given to the adult learners and the ways they have been received by these adult learners. Finally, Chapter Seven is a concluding discussion on the significance of literacy in a shared context of linguistic competence and communicative action through a dialectic between official discourse and people's participation.

Chapter 2

Literacy and Nationalist Thinking in India

1.0 LITERACY AND CULTURE AND THE POLITICS OF MODERNITY

In our Introductory chapter we noted that in mass education and literacy practices with a universal state planning must necessarily be related to mass-communication needs, occupational and identity needs of all groups in a society. In a broad cultural context, education can be seen to perform two main basic functions in a society. The first is to conserve and transmit useful, practical, and cognitive skills along with the cultural heritage of one's received tradition to the next generation. The second is to simultaneously enable a positive critique of one's heritage so as to provide, and create, a more adequate response for further changes. In both cases literacy has to be critical and creative. Whatever the future may hold for a community (e.g. the nation), educational and literacy practices will always be a means to an end or desired goal whose visions are generated by modern forms of politics.

During the last two centuries, one of the grand narratives which visualised a common future for the entire international community was the Western 'modernity'[1]. In colonies like India, this project was initiated last century by colonial powers to coordinate the actions of governance on a massive scale. A new technology or art of governance was invented that would allow 'one to act effectively' even from a 'large distance from the object of action' through 'a minute division of labour' which was supposed to bring 'spectacular progress in expertise on the one hand and the floating of responsibility on the other'[2]. This vision which relies on the authority of modern science, knowledge and the 'science-sponsored mental climate of instrumental rationality that allows social-engineering designs' to operate has become a difficult and complex thing for the lay person to understand[3]. It is within this mental climate that colonial rule in India created a new educational structure and associated services which continues till today. As a background

[1] Modernity is related to modernism but is different from it. According to Madan Sarup, modernism 'is an intellectual and artistic trend', 'a comprehensive term for an international tendency in the arts of the West' developing since last two centuries. 'Modernity is associated with order, certainty, harmony, humanity, pure art, absolute truth'. The existence is said to be modern 'insofar as it is sustained by design, manipulation, management and engineering'. One Foucauldian argument 'emphasizes that *modern mastery is the power to divide, classify and allocate in thought and in practice*'. Madan Sarup (1996), Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World, 49-51

[2] ibid.

[3] ibid.

to our case-studies, in this chapter we are concerned with the colonial and nationalist vision of Indian society, its educational and literacy needs as articulated before the Independence in 1947. Subsequently in Chapter 3 we will analyse successive government's public policy goals which evolved after Independence. Here we will concentrate on the nature of modern education which is the Western or English education introduced in India during the last century. We will also analyse the thinking of Indian leaders and their thinking on the nature of educational needs in Indian society. We shall first outline the nature of colonial educational efforts in India and then examine the response of nationalist leaders. With the evidence now available on colonial education,[4] we will discuss briefly the making of colonial education beginning with the Orientalist-Anglicist debate. We will briefly analyse the educational pyramid it created with a disregard for traditional institutions; the effect it had on traditional learning, language of mass communication i.e. folk-bilingualism, and popular literacy practices; and finally, how most nationalists barring a few, though critical, had an ambiguous attitude towards English education. They nevertheless assumed that they had had to take up the role of educating the masses as 'outsiders'. The critique of Western education and alternative form for Indian mass education will be provided by an analysis of utterances of some prominent nationalists like Tagore and Gandhi.

1.1 THE COLONIAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Following Eric Stokes' arguments, Probal Dasgupta writes that 'the transition from mercantilism to industrial capitalism in Britain induced a major shift in colonial policy. This shift, which unfolded throughout the nineteenth century in British India, was from a hands-off attitude (characteristics of Warren Hastings) towards the indigenous culture to deliberate intervention (characteristics of Cornwallis and later administrators) with the purpose of introducing Western attitudes and practices in the colonised societies'[5]. One major intervention was the introduction of a modern system of education with English language as the medium of instruction. It was thought that with English education and the learning of European science and literature as a gift from the colonial masters, there will be

[4] These cover both original reports and textual commentaries: e.g., William Adam's Report on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Behar -1835, 1836 and 1838 , (1868); G.W. Leitner (1882, 1991), History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab since Annexation and in 1882 ; H.R. James (1911), Education and Statesmanship in India ; Eric Stokes (1959), The English Utilitarians and India ; Aparna Basu (1974), The Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898-1920 ; Dharampal (1983), The Beautiful Tree ; Krishna Kumar (1991), Political Agenda of Education - A study of colonialist and nationalist ideas

[5] Probal Dasgupta (!993), 'The Roots of Structuralism and Loharam Shiroratna', (Chapter 4) in Alok Bhalla and Sudhir Chandra (eds.) Indian Responses to Colonialism in the 19th Century, 63

an improvement in a pagan civilization like India[6]. The legitimising basis of the new system was fashioned on a European 'rationalist' discourse of science, progress and modernity advanced with the help of some specific arguments of utilitarian theory that made it particularly useful for the justification of colonialism[7]. Its epistemological basis was an impersonal stance of abstract and decontextualised knowledge which was to be exported to countries like India through a new system of educational institutions. It was believed that older indigenous institutions of learning were inadequate for modern purposes. The main vehicle of the British colonial agenda for exporting, not developing a 'modernist' culture was the English language. In fact, English was the main carrier of higher education from secondary education onwards. The reforms started with educational discourses which first took shape in Bengal Presidency from early 19th century[8]. The educational initiative in the two other two Presidency towns of Madras and Bombay were 'similar but less advanced as regards the study of English'[9].

Before the arrival of English utilitarians such as James Mill, J.S. Mill, Lord William Bentinck (Governor-General) and Macaulay during the 1920s and 30s, 'there was already a difference of opinion over debate of English Education vs. indigenous Classicals'[10]. By 1824 the utilitarian James Mill had started reacting to the activities of the General Committee of Public Instruction and strongly propounded the idea that 'the great end should not have been to teach Hindu learning, but useful learning'[11]. The Orientalist position was mainly concerned with the Indian philosophical and religious traditions and with the use of vernaculars in education[12]. However, as a prime mover of this debate, Thomas Babington Macaulay, as the President of the General Committee of Public Instruction in 1835, put up a utilitarian question: 'we have a fund to be employed as Government shall direct for the intellectual improvement of the people of this country. The simple question is, what is the most useful way of employing it?'[13] With this, the Orientalist-Anglicist debate turned into a divisive issue of whether administrative reforms

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[6] S.C. Ghosh (1993), '"English in taste, in opinion, in words and intellect" - Indoctrinating the Indian through textbook, curriculum and education' (Chapter 11) in J.A. Mangam (ed.) The imperial curriculum - Racial images and education in the British colonial experience, 175- 193

[7] Sudipta Kaviraj (1992), 'The imaginary institution of India' in Partha Chatterjee and Gyan Pandey (eds.) Subaltern Studies VII , 1- 39; and also his essay, 'On the construction of colonial power: structure, discourse, hegemony' in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds.) (1994), Contesting Colonial Hegemony, 19-54; Krishna Kumar (1991)

[8] see James, op.cit., 18

[9] ibid.

[10] James, op.cit., 19

[11] quoted in S.C. Ghosh, op.cit.

[12] Krishna Kumar, op.cit., 68

[13] James, op.cit., 21-22

and modern education for initiating the desired 'rationalist' path of progress in India should be directed towards acculturating an elite, who in turn could be expected to educate the masses, or whether mass education should be started on a wide scale to achieve such an aim. The debate was eventually won by a pragmatist argument advanced by the Anglicists. The Anglicists argued that indigenous resources were too inadequate for such purposes, and that the utilitarian solution was to start immediately on a limited scale. It was a practical and easy way to acculturate a native class of educated elites and administrators who in turn would do the major task of educating the masses under their surveillance. With such a division of labour, it was easier to control the masses and preserve the structures of dominance and power. Thus the main objective of the utilitarian-rationalist argument lay essentially in 'control' and not in 'pedagogy'. Probal Dasgupta points out that this happens 'when the metropolis exports its spirit to the emerging "centre of the periphery", the native elite of the colony. Gradually, and through an uneven development, the privilege of defining the colonised culture as "passive" and "Other" is handed over to the native-elite - producing a semblance of native participation in the enterprise, but ensuring that the form of metropolitan expertise remains in power, so that the native intellectual works in and for the metropolitan system. The free or self-defining discourse is still Western'[14]. Thus it was recognised at that time by Macaulay and others like him that this policy would produce a class of Westernized Indian elite. Ironically, this elite would eventually demand political freedom, but after independence decided to pursue the ideal of a westernized nation-state.

The pragmatist-utilitarian logic of the Anglicists also meant that government initiative and emphasis was to be primarily concentrated on higher education, and the agenda of mass education was left for later generations of native rulers. In 1857, three Presidency town universities, namely Calcutta, Madras and Bombay (though none in the Hindi region until next three decades) were created on the model of London University as the main controlling bodies of the entire new educational pyramid. These universities had ultimate controlling authority over the curriculum, instruction, medium of language and examinations in both the secondary schools and colleges which came under their jurisdiction. Despite rhetorical concerns expressed in Wood's Despatch of 1854, most institutions of higher and secondary education funded and supported by government were compulsorily required to teach all subjects *including the vernacular* in English language. Krishna Kumar writes that 'though little was done to introduce the learning of science in schools, colonial rhetoric from Macaulay onwards was never lacking in the emphasis on

[14] Dasgupta (1993), 63-64

the role of science in India's progress. Indeed the alleged lack of science in the Indian tradition, and its strong presence in the European tradition of knowledge, served as the hinges allowing a smooth introduction of English language and learning in the curriculum of Indian education'[15]. Similarly the importance of popular mass education as a responsibility of Government was at the heart of every major document since Charles Trevelyan (1838) published his famous book entitled, *Education and the People of India*[16]. The question of vernacular mass education was discussed by Wood's despatch in considerable detail but the authorities shared hardly any serious concern in terms of implementation[17]. Thus colonial education policies successfully created a new class of anglicized Brahmins, including some other upper-caste men whose mind had been reformed through English education and who had an appreciation for things British, but a disdain for their own culture and community. The disdain was so strong that later when efforts for provision of mass elementary education in the vernacular were tried, it met strong opposition from the native elites in Bengal (which included Bihar) and in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh[18]. For example, during the 1860s and 1870s when Mayo and Curzon 'wanted to stop aiding higher English education' and divert those 'government funds to the spread of the three 'R' village schools', the 'vocal *bhadrolok* of Bengal raised a hue and cry against such a government policy and organized protest meetings throughout the Presidency'[19]. In fact Curzon wanted to provide English instruction to children only when they had mastered their own language. English had no place in his scheme of primary education, but it was too late then to reverse any policy which might go against any interest of the elites.

The modernist discourse, embedded in an alien language and foreign ideals, has come to stay with the native class of reformed upper-caste elites who were/are the products of English education. It was this class which was the dominant protagonist of modernity in colonial India. This class has become ever stronger in contemporary India. The Indian response to the colonial discourse on the role of education and national identity, was discussed and debated by native leaders and elites during the national movement. These debates were, however, not exclusively in terms of educational issues *per se* but as part of a

[15] Krishna Kumar (1991), 41-42
[16] ibid.
[17] ibid.
[18] Poromesh Acharya (1996), 'The Politics of Popular Education' in T.V. Satyamurthy (ed.) Class Formation and Political Transformation in Post Colonial India, 394-397; and C.R. King (1994), One Language, Two Scripts - The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India, 93-94
[19] Acharya, op.cit.

'nationalist' thinking and response to challenges of modernity. As government policies related to education, language and employment had great influence on the aspirations of the educated, particularly those literate in English, both government officials and Indians in general regarded the vernaculars as inferior to English. Without carefully examining the basis of mass communication needs and the associational or interactional dynamics of indigenous learning institutions managed by Maulvis and Pandits, precedence was given to an Anglicized system of education. When education was transferred to the Indian elite's hands, most of them did not think of reworking on the indigenous institutions so that they could be adapted to new demands in order to make them more relevant, efficient and competitive[20]. Indigenous learning, language and literature which appeared ridiculous to the colonial rulers, had also become irrelevant for the modernist nationalist elites in India.

1.2 TRADITIONAL vs. MODERN SCHOOLING: A COMPARATIVE NOTE

A general and comparative account of the status and nature of indigenous learning and modern schooling is necessary here to point out the relevance of specific types of communication and interaction in pedagogy. The theoretical aspects of this pedagogy has been already discussed in Chapter One. We have William Adam's Report (1835, 1836 and 1838) on education in Bengal and Bihar, C.C. Fink's Report (1845) on education in the North-West Provinces and Oudh, and G.W. Leitner's account (1882) of education in Punjab. All three reports cover the modern north Indian states. All three reports appear to be close to reality but Leitner's account appears to provide us an argumentative and descriptive analysis of the then ongoing development in education, and hence is probably more reliable. During 1870s and 1880s, Dr. G.W. Leitner was the Principal of the Lahore College in Punjab, and was previously a scholar of Arabic and Persian learning at the King's College London. Leitner himself considers the official records or reports both on indigenous and government schools to be unreliable for various solid (fifteen in number) reasons[21]. After conducting surveys personally, Leitner concludes that there were numerous indigenous schools in the Provinces of Punjab which included present Delhi and Haryana. Some of these schools were very efficient and on the whole they were also much more useful to the common masses than the newly introduced schools under the government[22]. He quotes an extract from "Ludlow's British India":

[20] Leitner, op.cit., see Introduction, i-viii
[21] op.cit., 3
[22] op.cit., 3, 19, 21

> Where the village system has been swept away by us, as in Bengal, there the village school has equally disappeared. ... In every Hindu village which has retained anything of its form ... the rudiments of knowledge are sought to be imparted; there is not a child, except those of outcaste (who form no part of the community), who is not able to read, to write, to cipher, in the last branch of learning they were confessedly most proficient[23].

C.C. Fink (1945) reports about the North-West Provinces and Oudh, and like his colleagues in other districts he divided the indigenous schools into four categories: Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Hindi. In the Agra district he reports that 'Hindi schools (128) outnumbered all the rest put together. Persian school (85) came next, while Sanskrit (6) and Arabic (1) ran a distant third and fourth. Each category of schools displayed distinct social configurations; both teachers and pupils came from certain definite religious or caste groups. Each category also exhibited striking difference in the aspirations of its students, and in their rural and urban origins'[24]. According to Leitner's account, in Punjab alone there were almost over three lakhs (0.3 million) students engaged in learning of the 3Rs, and some thousands were engaged in Oriental literature, systems of law, logic, philosophy and medicine at higher levels. He writes: 'Tens of thousands acquired proficiency in Persian, which is now rarely reached in Government and Aided schools or colleges'[25]. Most of the indigenous schools 'breathed a spirit of devotion to education for their own sake and for their influence on character and on religious culture'[26]. This implies that the language of interaction followed a norm of respect for each other and a devotion to learning, encouraging both the hearer and the speaker to participate. Such an environment encourages confidence in the weakest learners. Learning was both ritualistic, particularly at the lower levels, and explanatory at much higher levels. The primary communicative function of the 'explanatory' curriculum was to amplify the meaning of a text, and function of the 'ritual' was to initiate the learner into devotion for learning and committing the various genres habitually into the memory. 'The highest instruction in law and religion was generally confined to the Brahmin caste' while 'secular learning was, practically thrown open to all'; even the sons of *Banyas* (business community) who only learnt what was useful to their livelihood 'looked with respect, amounting to adoration, on their humble Paandhas, who had taught them elements of two "Rs".'[27]

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[23] op.cit., 18
[24] King, op.cit., 94
[25] Leitner, op.cit., i
[26] ibid.
[27] op.cit., i and 18

The most distinguishable and valuable aspect of indigenous education was its mode of teaching and learning, and not its curriculum or organisation of schools which were certainly inferior compared to modern schools. Under the indigenous system, the teacher and the pupil were in 'personal relations of respect on the one side and of affection on the other', the teacher in himself was the institution, free to teach anything. He based his teaching on an interactive communication and explanation of every "minute details" related to 'every possible circumstances' or reality of Indian discourse and local context[28]. The mode of instruction was "emphatically practical". According to both C.R. King (1994) and G.W. Leitner (1882), 'the vernaculars fared better in the indigenous schools'[29]. It is true that there was no formal examination-based qualification, but 'learning' was the main qualification, the main emphasis. It did not require any external authority to testify or certify that learning. There was no strict curriculum-based instruction and an integrated and centralised school management in the modern sense. Despite these apparent 'lacks', disputations in Sanskrit and Persian were common in the higher spheres of learning. Even at lower levels, the oral repetition of the day's lesson in a chorus, seemed to encourage emulation as well as comprehension. The great majority was 'taught simple arithmetic, the keeping of agriculture or commercial accounts, and the reading and writing of the Devnagari script along with its cursive variants Kaithi and Mahajani. ... Most of the students in these schools aspired only to humble occupations such as being a shopkeeper or a *patwari* (keeper of village land records)'[30].

As regards arithmetic, repetition and memorization of multiplication tables were emphasised. This included ordinary (1 to 10) x (1 to 10); superior (*bara gyara*) i.e. (11 to 30) x (11 to 30); fractional (1 to 50) x (1.25, 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, 4.5, 5.5, etc.); also some fractions into fractions - e.g. 1.25 x 1.5, 1.5 x 2.5, 2.5 x 3.5, etc.. Leitner informs us that this included some 'rules' or *gurs* of mental arithmetic related to chiefly business and agriculture. These were learnt with ease and comfort, and could 'confuse and surprise' our modern mathematicians. Leitner laments that instead of collecting and developing these *gurs*, the modern educational system deprecated the Mahajani (*Banya*) schools with contempt[31]. There was no proposal to either understand, borrow or upgrade the principles of this excellent system of book-keeping and of accounts in order to make them more

[28] Leitner, op.cit., 19. One may add that reports of corporal punishment and cruel behaviour with students found in some reports may be true, and may be considered as laxness in the system but Leitner considers such reports to be exaggerated, and asserts that they were equally evident in state-run schools.
[29] King, op.cit., 94; and Leitner, op.cit., viii
[30] King, op.cit., 95
[31] Leitner, op. cit., 39

relevant to modern business. Leitner writes: 'To learn how to calculate mentally, to keep business correspondence and bahi-khatas is no mean achievement, whilst the connexion of writing or reciting the alphabet, &c., with short sentences, sometimes in verse, containing lessons of morality and prudence' were impressive[32]. Of course, for the majority, rote-learning was the main mode of learning but Leitner informs us that this was more common in government schools under the modern system of education[33]. This may be because things are either irrelevant or decontextualised, in which case learners take recourse to rote-learning without any understanding or comprehension of the subject-matter. We are told this was more common under the new system. The importance and popularity of local vernacular schools is hard to be gleaned from official records. Nevertheless, one School Inspector visiting a Mohemmedan school in Bhagalpur (Bihar) during the mid-19th century noted that in addition to basic literacy, history, geography and mathematics were also taught. These schools were more popular than the English schools. It is reported:

> Such is the important function which Vernacular Schools are performing, albeit only Lower Class Schools, ill-supported and too little encouraged. They are drawing a large section of an influential class who have persistently kept aloof for the most part from English Schools, where the pupils acquire the 'foreign dress and manners which will shut them out from Paradise,' and where the time allotted to Oriental literature and the language of Koran, with the small consideration in which Arabic and Persian literature are held, are wholly inadequate and fall far short of the value set on it by themselves.[34]

On the other hand, there was a widespread unease even in official circles that the schools under the new system were completely dissociated from the existing forms of language, knowledge and skills as Sir D. Macleod, the Governor of Punjab observed about English medium education:

> The great bulk of our scholars never attain more than a very superficial knowledge, either of English or of the subjects they study in that language, while the mental training imparted is, as a general rule, of a purely imitative character, ill-calculated to raise the nation to habits of vigorous or independent thought.[35]

> It appears indeed evident that, to impart knowledge in a foreign tongue must of necessity greatly increase the difficulties of education. In England, where the Latin and Greek languages are considered an essential part of a polite education, all general instruction is conveyed, not in those languages, but in the vernacular of the country; and it seems difficult to assign a sufficient reason why a different principle should be acted upon here.[36]

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[32] op.cit., 41
[33] ibid.
[34] Rev. J. Long's Introductory note to Adam's Reports (1868), op.cit., 34
[35] ibid.
[36] ibid.

However, as regards literacy, language-teaching in indigenous institutions was considered as part of a culture rather than a part of mental discipline or cognitive bio-programming i.e. it was considered part of social semiotics rather than verbal semiotics:

> The vision of language that underlay the work of Paninian scholars assumed that this grass-roots popular handing down of some form of speech can be taken for granted and is none of the grammarians business. The job of language management belongs to culture in the sense of cultivation, ... The grammarian, as a language manager, must help safeguard the careful elite tradition by transmitting codified standards through the education system and reproducing the hegemony of the old standards effectively. It is in order to remain effective that grammarians must selectively welcome some new and colloquial forms that are finding their way into the literary standard, for what the grammarian wants to teach the children must be something recognisably close enough to the actual contemporary language for the children to be willing to learn it and accept it as their own cultivated language, as part of their heritage to be used[37].

Leitner recognises that 'above all, it was this manner of teaching grammar that Panini became a model to European philologists'[38]. Apart, study of rhetorics was part of main higher language-learning which included not only a guide to polite conversation, manners and etiquette, but also explanations of allusion as well as prosody. All this was carried in native language, established and familiar speech norms, and was related to popular religion, culture and occupational interests[39]. Though in many ways inadequate, the pedagogy was based on communication. This pedagogy gave sufficient space for resolution of contradictions between the teacher and the pupil. The indigenous learning was inadequate for modern needs of a technological and highly organised society. There was also comparative paucity of a regular and systematized learning for all, and it lacked a critical and scientific ethos for further development. It was in a sense repetitive and functionally status-quoist in favour of a moral and religious order. The point we want to make here is that new government schools introduced under modern education were neither suited to the mass needs nor were they closer to cultural and linguistic traditions of the society.

The government modern schools introduced under the new system were unhelpful for the majority for various reasons. First, as we have pointed out, these schools were never made available to the majority of common masses. Second, the system was started fresh from scratch, and was completely alien to the soil. Both the content of the curriculum and the medium and mode of instruction was foreign, i.e. English or European in origin. The

[37] Dasgupta (1993), 82
[38] Leitner, op.cit., 20
[39] op.cit., 82


entire basis of knowledge and its mode of transmission was based on an impersonalised knowledge, on a essayist-text information, on a 'banking' concept of education, where all information is deposited by the teacher to be received patiently, memorized, stored and repeated by the pupil[40]. The inter-personal influence of both the teacher and the pupil on each other, as well as the communicative basis of traditional learning disappeared in the new schools. This was replaced by 'the more artificial stimulus of the chance of employment under Government'[41]. In this context, Partha Chatterjee has argued that the British in India did not encourage a true and scientific education for Indians[42]. Apart from these, there was a basic contradiction in British language policy in education since the introduction of modern system. C.R. King points out that British attitudes towards Hindi and Urdu languages in north India were reflected in policies marked by 'ignorance, inconsistencies, and contradictions'[43]. Often officials had 'widely differing views', and their 'enforcement of policies fluctuated, depending on the zeal of the enforcing officer and the strength of Indian resistance or support ... This policy intensified the underlying differentiation between two great religious groups of north India, Hindus and Muslims, by supporting an educational system that encouraged two different styles of the same linguistic continuum, Hindi-Urdu. Moreover, this policy fostered a Hindi-speaking elite by providing Hindi speakers with employment in the educational system, and simultaneously favoured an Urdu-speaking elite by retaining Urdu as the only official vernacular for many years'[44]. Thus the utilitarian convenience and colonial interest of the rulers always outweighed the convenience and interest of the native masses.

A few specific forms of Indian knowledge and linguistic skills (such as Sanskrit and Arabic learning) associated with dominant groups were admitted as special cases to be taught only at higher institutions in cities like Calcutta, Lahore and Allahabad. The founding of first colleges and then universities in the Punjab, at Allahabad, Patna and Varanasi, in the north India brought no change in the status of vernaculars. It is quite surprising to note that at Allahabad University initially even Hindi language and literature was taught in English as were all other subjects, and until 1947 research theses on Hindi subjects were written in English[45]. Krishna Kumar writes that 'colonial rule permitted no

[40] Much of these aspects of modern knowledge we have discussed in our introductory chapter. For the concept of 'banking education'. See Paulo Freire (1972), Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Chapter 2
[41] Leitner, op.cit., 42
[42] Partha Chatterjee (ed.) (1996), Texts of Power: Emerging Discipline in Colonial Bengal, see Introduction
[43] King, op.cit., 54
[44] ibid.
[45] Francesca Orsini (1996), The Hindi Public Sphere: 1920-1940, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation , 100

possibility of the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and cultural forms in the curriculum' of either schools or colleges as they were considered 'deficient'[46]. Our argument is that, even if traditional learning and knowledge were deficient or inadequate for modern needs, these represented existing stocks of knowledge and linguistic attachments which could be used as base lines for further educational training and reconstruction.

According to Krishna Kumar, modern education became less important for educating the masses and spreading knowledge and was intended more to exert moral influence and to assert the superiority of the Western civilisation[47]. Political legitimacy was the main underlying concern of the colonial discourse of education which sought to secure and construct a colonized Indian identity with the help of a mix of cultural legitimization and other crude forms of military-cum-political imperialism. These cultural stereotypes projected the natives as inferior, often childlike and feminine, incapable of exercising moral judgement[48]. Hence the natives were supposed to be trained by 'enlightened' Europeans who were god-sent missionaries of rationality rather than profiteers. With the spread of colonial education, this role of the 'enlightened outsider' (i.e. the British) was transferred to a few educated Indians who, with their sense of disdain for things indigenous, took up the task with great paternalistic enthusiasm. As could be expected, such paternalism in its aggravated form, became intolerant of individual autonomy in thinking and decision-making among the common people. Instead, this class of elites privileged itself in national leadership and decision-making. Bartle Frere, the Governor of Bombay in 1862 had encouraged Indian students with the words: 'the character of your whole people is to a great extent in your hands'[49]. Educated Indians slowly picked up this role of 'enlightened' leaders for the masses, and developed a sense of moral superiority over the masses assigning themselves the task of social reform and national reconstruction. Ordinary people and groups were left to follow their leaders. W.C. Bonnerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress, wrote to his uncle in 1865: 'I have discarded all ideas of caste, I have come to hate all the demoralising practices of our countrymen and I write this letter an entirely altered man'[50].

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[46] Krishna Kumar (1991), 14
[47] Kumar, op.cit., 30-34
[48] see S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., and Ashis Nandy (1983), The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism
[49] quoted in Krishna Kumar (1991), 14 and 40
[50] quoted in Kumar, op.cit., 34

1.3 THE GROWING EDUCATIONAL BACKWARDNESS OF THE HINDI REGION

In the Hindi region of north India, educational progress has seen extremely slow development right from the beginning of colonial rule. Since the English speaking nationalist elites worked generally from the metropolises isolated from the lower layers of the vernacular public, the links between ordinary people and the local and national elites in this region remained weak until Gandhi led mass movements in the 1920s. This elitist and urban development created a communication gap between the various layers of educated and uneducated public in the Hindi region. Unlike Presidency towns in the Bengali, Maratha and Tamil regions, the picture of elite alienation in the Hindi region was compounded by the fact that the standard, written form of Hindi that vernacular intellectuals evolved as public language of print and education was similarly alien to the speech varieties of the 'illiterate' and semi-literate population. The linguistic acts, dispositions, attitudes of vernacular elites of the Hindi region , including both Hindi and Urdu elites in their search for self-identity were becoming 'revivalist' and conservative[51]. Under the influence of this 'revivalist' movement both the Hindi and Urdu literati had delimited the political use of the popular language varieties (commonly called Hindustani) into a narrow dialect of educational and cultural status by including more and more Sanskritised and Persianised words in their vocabulary. At the same time, they had closed themselves off from the other widely used spoken varieties of the region such as Awadhi, Bundeli, Chhatisgarhi, Bhojpuri, Maithili, and the several tribal languages of central India. Also, lack of transport, communication, printing presses and other means of publicity added to their handicap in forging a link with these powerful regional dialects. Even when Gandhi led the mass movement in this region, the intermediary local vernacular elites failed to develop a popular communicative style of speech and vocabulary, and this inhibited openness of speech and autonomy among grass-roots individuals and local groups. In the main, the intermediary vernacular Hindi elites preserved their stance of 'paternalism' combining both the English and Brahminical attitude, and they remained distanced from the lower publics in their educational role. English education contrived to develop only superficially and on a small scale. Modern education in this region not only failed to establish itself from below but it further intensified the existing hierarchy by adding on an anglicized elite layer from the top in the social and educational structure.

[51] Kumar, op.cit., see Chapter 6 on 'Quest for Self - Identity'

These lacks and slow developments in the Hindi region only helped to consolidate the fragmented structure and diffuse linguistic identity among its public, as evidenced in the Hindi-Urdu divide which grew stronger in the wake of 'revivalist' national identity in the region. This was also because, while the vernacular elites of other regions got a sufficient competitive boost to organise and articulate their own, as well as the general interests of, their linguistic community, the Hindi region with its many speech varieties was still steeped in medievalism of either caste-group solidarity or religious fundamentalism[52]. 'Hindi intellectuals and literary associations were largely successful in their task, in so far as it involved carving a niche for themselves and their agenda in the colonial education system. They were not as successful in 'vernacularising' knowledge, that is in bringing about a wholesale transformation of the education system. This might have had to do with their limited resources, with the hierarchical nature of colonial education, and with the huge practical difficulties - which made education *tout court* quite a limited affair in north India in this period' (i.e. 1920-40)[53].

Also, the language of contemporary discourses (namely, modernist, reformist and revivalist) was not only difficult to the uneducated vernacular public but confusing, rhetorical and manipulative. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the language of nationalist discourse and political change, as conveyed through popular national symbols and actions led by Gandhi in north India and the Kisan Sabha movement in Bihar, were quite intelligible to the masses, which enabled them to participate actively in the national movement. Whatever rise in the level of mass social and political consciousness we find in this region during the first half of this century can be largely attributed to public participation in various peasant movements like the Kisan Sabha, the Gandhian mass movements and the discourse of *Swaraj*.[54] It is in this sense that we find public life in north India to be politically highly literate though educationally backward.

2.0 THE NATIONALISTS AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL THINKING

It is difficult to analyze the contemporary role of literacy or education without taking into consideration the vision produced by some of the prominent leaders of the nationalist movement. It is striking that none of the nationalist leaders (except for a few

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[52] Rambilas Sharma (1989), *Bhasha Aur Samaj*, 361

[53] Francesca Orisini, op.cit., 110

[54] For the role of Kisan Sabha in Bihar, see Vinita Damodaran (1992), Broken Promises - Popular Protest, Indian Nationalism and the Congress Party in Bihar, 1935-1946. For a study of the impact of the Gandhian mass movements and the discourse of *Swaraj*, see Sumit Sarkar (1983), Modern India: 1885-1947; and B.C. Parekh (1989), Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: an analysis of Gandhi's political discourse

like Tagore and Gandhi) who discussed educational change radically dissented from the basic assumptions of the colonial discourse on education. The basic premises were accepted by a majority of nationalists including Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. Only Gandhi and Tagore provided a profound and complete discourse on education specifically relevant to the Indian context. Nehru did not write anything specific and exclusive on education and literacy. In such a situation, the role of literacy and education can be discerned only from his broad general vision about independent India which drew upon both *swadeshi* (indigenous) and Western modernist language but was more inclined towards the latter.

If nations are indeed 'imagined communities' as Benedict Anderson has so persuasively suggested, one of the specific modes of imagining the nation is the emergence of print capitalism and print language which can be seen primarily in terms of literacy use and its effect and which made available historically unprecedented technical means for the thinking of the nation. Anderson is right in insisting that nations must be distinguished not by the truth or falsity[55] of the claims they make, but by the style in which they are imagined. However, he considers only a very limited number of styles, and more precisely, he excludes from his analysis a major source of materials for the nationalist imagination in the third world, namely, the economy - the material reality. It is not only the print commodities but other commodities too which provide means to imagine the nation, such as hand-woven cloth or common salt, the symbolic examples which Gandhi used for political mobilization in India. The popularity of 'Varanasi Saris', 'Aligarh Locks', 'Dehraduni Basmati Rice', 'Bengal Rice', 'Jharia Coal-fields', 'Hajipur and Chandannagar Bananas', 'Dhaka Silks', 'Hyderabadi Pearls', 'Kanyakumari Temples', are other examples of commodities which enabled people to imagine the territorial context of their culture and empire before India was imagined as a modern nation-state. These are still the popular notions and modes of imagining the nation in rural India. However, while Anderson emphasizes the emotive aspects of the national imagination, Ernest Gellner in a very different way places the economy at the core of his argument. His thesis is that nationalism is a response to the strengthening of industrial society which requires a 'homogeneous high culture' for the 'musical chairs' economy characteristic of modern societies where mobility across diverse occupations is a fundamental need. Nationalism thus performs the function of educating, imparting a generic cultural training to individuals who should be able to 'communicate contextlessly' with each other in this constantly changing social

[55] Benedict Anderson (1983), Imagined Communities , 15

environment[56]. This is a modern necessity as the members of industrial society 'must constantly communicate with a large number of other men, with whom they frequently have no previous association, and with whom communication must consequently be explicit, rather than relying on context'[57].

Despite the revolutionary significance generally attributed to it, print in colonial India did not function as a radically autonomous agency. Only with the rise of a small middle class, the growth of distant markets and the introduction of a new system of higher education could print affect the oral mode of communication and knowledge transmission in India. Knowledge and information through print on a local or national level remained limited, and mostly confined to English-language newspapers[58]. Here, Jawaharlal Nehru's reflections on British-Indian newspapers is worth considering:

> I remember that when I was a boy the British-owned newspapers in India were full of official news and utterances; of service news, transfers and promotions; of the doings of British society, of polo, races, dances, and amateur theatricals. There was hardly a word about the people of India, about their political, cultural, social and economic life. Reading them one would hardly suspect that they existed.[59]

Under colonial conditions, the use of print in India by privilege catered to imperial interests and discourses which acted more as a hindrance than as an aid to publicity of nationalist thinking since resources and freedom for the use of print were lacking[60]. A few like Gandhi, who could avail himself of print facilities, made extensive use of it. But the nationalist imagination through print in the Hindi region remained constrained by censorship, high cost involved in establishing a printing press, lack of a unified public and common language and elite-mass alienation. Above all, ironically, the advent of nationalist imagination in the region was pulled by tensions between the imperialist and the Orientalist discourses open to the modernist elites of India. Thus M.G. Ranade hoped that sooner or later, 'the national mind' would 'digest the best thoughts of Western Europe with the same intimate appreciation that it has shown in the assimilation of the old Sanskrit learning'[61]. The basic premise common to both the Europeans and these 'anglicized upper-caste elites' was that the Indian masses suffered from moral and material poverty and that it was only with their help that the character of the Indian masses could be improved. Eminent

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[56] Ernest Gellner (1983), Nations and Nationalism , 35-37
[57] ibid.
[58] Here, English refers to national and Hindi as regional
[59] Jawaharlal Nehru (1946, 1981), The Discovery of India , 294
[60] Most indigenous newspapers and journals failed to meet the cost of print, and a few which existed often met censorship and hence were banned. See N. Kumar (1971), 'Journalism in Bihar' in Bihar District Gazetteers , Government of Bihar
[61] Sudhir Chandra (1994), The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India, 14

nationalist leaders like M.G. Ranade, Raja Rammohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Lajpat Rai and Sri Aurobindo, all shared this basic premise of modernising people's attitudes with didactic messages and instruction from the top[62]. Similar in basic assumptions, both the colonial and anglicized Brahminical discourses were paternalistic in their approach to mass education, mass literacy and mass reform. This creed of the anglicized leaders drew heavily upon the Brahminical tradition and the European discourses. They could hardly appreciate the non-esoteric forms of popular indigenous knowledge held by ordinary people, or think of adopting them in either the curriculum of common schools or their own discourses. In the Hindi region a few of the nationalist leaders like Madan Mohan Malviya, along with a host of new Hindi literati, had the same paternalistic inclination where language and education were used to create a Hindu identity synonymous with a 'class dialect' of upper-caste educated youths 'in which rejection of English was' just one layer sitting 'above a painstakingly assembled mass of anti-Muslim consciousness'[63].

2.1 CRITICAL TRENDS IN NATIONALIST EDUCATIONAL THINKING

Rejection of English, however, did find some strong articulation in the writings of Hindi literati like Ramchandra Shukla. Shukla, in a feature article[64] entitled 'What does India have to do?' published in 1907, wrote about what he thought Indian education should aim at. In this article, Shukla emphasised that education, apart from its functional uses and acculturating role in influencing minds and ideas, should ultimately aim at developing critical thinking in order to raise consciousness about social responsibilities towards oneself and others. By higher consciousness he also meant '*Lok Dharma*' (the public good)[65], a collective sense of responsibility towards both the local '*samaj*' (community) as well as the '*rashtra*' (nation). A good education should not only enlighten us with higher motives rising above our self-interest, (thus producing more than just 'yes/loyal' men) but also new discursive skills that would be required by the '*lok*' (public) for its use and further development. By education he also meant 'political education' by which matters of public significance as well as complex and abstract intellectual ideas, required by a scientific and democratic community, could be made available to ordinary people. Such a public or political education would enable people to understand society in terms of the needs of other

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[62] Krishna Kumar (1992), 44
[63] op.cit., 17-18
[64] Ramchandra Shukla, 'What does India have to do?' (*Bharat ko kya karana hai*?) in Hindustan Review February, 1907 quoted in Shambhunath (1988), Bouddhik Upaniveshvad Ki Chunauti Aur Ramchandra Shukla, 28-30
[65] Shambhunath, op.cit., 98

individuals, unlike the 'individualist' education which produces misgivings about and competition with, each other. Such a political education would also train the masses to understand and to criticise their leaders. Thus he wrote, 'political education to start with, must at least make every villager aware of his miseries; every villager should be able to find out for himself why even when he labours so hard, he earns so little'[66]. Education, he explained, should 'enable every citizen-subject to think and know why demand for his labour, skills and services are becoming increasingly so meagre; in fact it should allow every individual to think and analyse why his country is getting embroiled in mass poverty and destitution'[67]. Writing in the early 20th century as a Hindi writer without any formal university qualification Shukla came to emphasise a political perspective in education. Shukla wanted to give a 'classical-rationalist' direction to nationalist thinking in the Hindi region, which tilted towards a romantic-revivalist tradition[68]. He was perhaps the first in the Hindi region as far back as 1907 to point out that education can never, and should never, be far neutral. He wanted the villagers to become critical about the British rule, but not the Zamindars (landlords). He pointed out that it was political education alone which could liberate human ideals and ideas from the cage of alienating individualism of the self-privileging elites. However, as a literary person, Shukla did not write much on education. Under Shukla, and a few other new Hindi writers of his generation, Hindi literature had become a 'secret door' through which 'cultural nationalism' could enter the colonial higher education system, but it also 'imposed a rigid linguistic and cultural ideal' which has survived undisturbed in independent India[69]. In view of these limitations of the Hindi elites, it is necessary to examine the educational ideas of some more prominent nationalist leaders and scholars of other regions. This will enable us to understand the dynamics of the native mind and alternative visions for an indigenous educational reconstruction.

In Bengal, some writers like Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya and K.C. Bhattacharya, raised some specific questions about the role of the 'mother-tongue' and '*swaraj* in ideas' respectively which we will discuss here briefly, since they relate to our theory on mass education. We will also discuss Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) as internationalist and nationalist thinkers respectively who provided a thorough, radical discourse to initiate a new thinking for the role of education in national re-construction. These men were deeply concerned about the unhappy India of the masses

[66] ibid.
[67] ibid.
[68] op.cit., 30
[69] Orsini, op.cit., 111

whose vernacular (local) sense of identity and 'oral' achievement was to be recovered and strengthened for a national reconstruction. A unique and different narrative was constructed for such a national reconstruction in their idea of *swaraj* (self-determination or freedom). *Swaraj* was a goal to be achieved at all levels - individual, regional and national and for all, and in every sphere, in ideas, culture, economics and politics. For this aim, re-establishing public faith in indigenous forms and institutions was considered essential, not in their original form but in a new reconstructed form[70]. The *Swaraj* discourse argued that all alien forms of development, discourses and institutions imposed on the native soil were ill-equipped to substitute for the indigenous forms. It was argued that all modernising processes should be initiated and accepted democratically by the people in order to inspire their sense of association, motivation and self-respect. Gandhi, for example, believed that the masses should be instruments of their own improvement. Before going into a detailed discussion of Gandhi's attitude, we shall offer a summary account of the ideas concerning mass education of Bhattacharya, Bhudev and Tagore.

K.C. Bhattacharya, though less of an educationist and more of a philosopher-cum-teacher, in his 'Svaraj in Ideas' (1929) defines *swaraj* as 'self-determination in politics'[71]. Writing in the colonial context, he begins by stating that 'man's domination over man is felt in the most tangible form in the political sphere', although it is in the sphere of ideas that most 'subtle' forms of 'domination' are exercised by one culture over another, and that such domination is more serious in its consequences, 'because it is not ordinarily felt' by people, even the more educated ones[72]. Bhattacharya realised that if elites were enticed by colonising ideas, the entire country would come under cultural slavery. He argued that in such a case Indians would not know themselves unless they tried to understand the nature of the cultural subjection. According to Bhattacharya, cultural subjection had penetrated deeply as people had allowed their own 'traditional cast of ideas and sentiments' to be 'superseded without comparison or competition by a new cast representing an alien culture'[73]. In fact, some of the English educated Indians who condemned the prevailing caste system had carved themselves out as a separate caste which was 'more exclusive and intolerant than any of the traditional castes'. All this, according to him, was the 'inevitable result' of our "rootless" positivist education under which 'our educated men suffer more

[70] see Parekh (1989)
[71] K.C. Bhattacharya, 'Svaraj in Ideas' (1929) republished in Indian Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XI, No. 4 (1984), 383-393
[72] ibid.
[73] ibid.

from over-diffidence than from over-confidence, more from a 'rootless' universalism than from clinging particularism'[74]. He wrote:

> Our education has not so far helped us to understand ourselves, to understand the significance of our past, the realities of our present and our mission of the future. It has tended to drive our real mind into the unconscious and to replace it by a shadow mind that has no roots in our past and our real present. Our old mind cannot be wholly driven underground and its imposed substitute cannot function effectively and productively. The result is that there is a confusion between the two minds and a hopeless Babel in the world of ideas. Our thought is hybrid through and through and inevitably sterile. Slavery has entered into our every soul. The hybridisation of our ideas is evidenced by the strange medley of Vernacular and English...[75]

According to Bhattacharya, all societies have their own language and ideas which contain some ideals embodied in a structure of theory or social philosophy. All ideas and ideals develop distinctly and in unique ways in different cultures. No idea of any one culture can be exactly translated into another language since each culture has its own distinctive 'physiognomy' phrased in the grammar of their vital ideas and ideals. What is more important is to institutionalise our own native thinking and process of reflection, rather than allow aliens to define our ideals. Bhattacharya favoured neither a blind rejection of the West nor a blind acceptance of all that was indigenous. Cultural autarky was not his faith. In fact, while emphasising 'loyalty to our own ideals', he advocated 'openness to other ideals' with a 'determination not to reject them if they are found within our ideals and not to accept them till they are so found'[76]. The only way to appraise a new ideal was to look through one's own ideals and the only way to find a new identity was to deepen one's own traditional identity. In all such circumstances he advocated the need to recover the 'vernacular mind' which, under the weight of mighty influences, had 'lapsed below the conscious level'[77].

Budhev Mukhopadhyaya for a time an Inspector of Schools in Bihar, talked about the development of scientific knowledge and rationality in terms of the significance of mother-tongue education. Though Bhudev wrote much before K.C. Bhattacharya, here his ideas seem to follow our discussion on national education. Scientific knowledge, according to Bhudev, consisted in clarity and an ability to make distinctions, producing clear ideas of the laws of nature. According to Bhudev, a true scientific education is possible only if it allows a clear perception of objects in our immediate surroundings. This knowledge about

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[74] ibid.
[75] ibid.
[76] ibid.
[77] ibid.

an object or a reality could be grasped and expressed better and truly in the native language of the observer or the investigator[78]. The training given to Indian students in a foreign language cannot impart a scientific knowledge. 'The perception of the world and its objects can never be as clear in a foreign tongue as it can be in the mother tongue'[79]. Bhudev further argued that it was not only a matter of familiarity with words and their associations in a text that an Indian student generally failed to understand fully but also, and most significantly, a matter of expression and association in relation to the material world and textual experience, and to ideas expressed in those texts which did not correspond to Indian reality. Thus the English educated Indian students attained only a partial approximation of the reality and he believed that this has hampered the development of scientific knowledge in India. He also observed that in colleges or higher stages of education, the teachers teaching in a foreign language were barely able to teach in a scientific manner in order to encourage investigation and experimentation. Though Bhudev rightly pointed out that objectivity and clarity in scientific knowledge could be better achieved through mother-tongue education he saw such knowledge as a skill possessed only by educated members of society. In effect, he too undervalued the practical knowledge developed by common people which is also based on experiment and the experiences of daily life. Despite his concern for mother-tongue education, Bhudev aimed at developing only an educated class and a 'high culture' in the "vernacular", which is ironically also a minority culture.

Rabindranath Tagore also talked about the significance of mother-tongue education but his emphasis was, in the romantic idealist tradition, on the natural development of the child, emphasising spontaneity and creativity as the crux of learning. Tagore's ideas on education were very much in the tradition of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori and Wordsworth and this enabled him to develop a critique of the Anglicized education system in India, not on nationalistic grounds but on universalistic principles[80]. However, some of his thoughts have a direct bearing on primary education and the acquisition of basic skills. In a speech given in 1892 on *'Sikshar-Her-Pher'* (Confusion in Education), Tagore pointed out the folly of imparting education in an alien language. He observed that reading and writing in one's own language were taught as if it was a foreign language. Intuitive association with the aid of mother-tongue had no place in such a language-

[78] see *Samajik Prabandha* - Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya (edited by J.K. Chakraborty) (1981), 107-112
[79] ibid.
[80] see Krishna Kumar (1991), 161-166; R.S. Mani (1961), Educational Ideas and Ideals of Gandhi and Tagore; K.R. Salkar (1990), Rabindranath Tagore - His Impact on Indian Education ; and Joseph T. O'Connell, *et. al.*, (eds.) (1989), Presenting Tagore's Heritage in Canada, 89-101

teaching curriculum. Teaching was done in a de-contextualised manner which destroyed the coherence of the child's experience and his or her first language. Further, at higher levels this coherence was completely destroyed by the introduction of a completely alien language (i.e. English), of themes and perspectives which were not only inadequate but also alienating. He believed that mother-tongue education is like a breast milk, to replace mother-tongue education with a foreign language was like taking the child away from his or her mother-culture. Tagore, in principle, favoured mother-tongue education up to the highest levels of education. However in practice, as we will see, unlike Gandhi he was 'all in favour of teaching English as a subject even right from the beginning. In fact, English was taught from class I in '*Shiksha Satra*' of Shriniketan, a school for village children'[81]. Tagore was in favour of introducing English teaching when a child had become proficient in his or her mother-tongue. This in a way contradicts his own advice that 'mother-tongue education is like breast milk'. English education still appeared to him as the only way through which Indians could 'learn from the West the knowledge of modern science and technology', while the West would learn 'the spiritual wisdom and sacrificial attitudes of the East'[82]. Many like Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya however, believed that a reciprocal relationship between East and West on equal terms, as wished by Tagore, would never be realised. According to Sarat Chandra, 'the West would never give us their latest knowledge of science and technology nor would they inculcate the sacrificial attitude and spiritual wisdom of the East; rather they would like us to remain dependent on them for ever, in regard to modern science and technology so as to enable them to exploit us'[83].

However, as Yeats-Brown pointed out, 'behind Santiniketan, there is not yet the driving force of a popular movement, but only a great man'[84], and the tragedy with the Tagorean vision was that it was too idealist and romantic in the context of mass education in India. In Tagore, learning takes a romantic journey under conditions of full freedom but it does not consist of a critical elaboration, a consciousness of what one really is, knowing oneself as a product of historical processes. He wanted to criticise the inhuman face of libertarian education guided by a market economy, which produced competition, division and alienation and accepted foreign domination. But he did not see the hegemonic relationship of education to politics or the political domination of powerful groups in

[81] Poromesh Acharya (1997), 'Educational Ideals of Tagore and Gandhi - A Comparative Study', EPW, Vol. XXXII, No. 12, 601-606
[82] ibid.
[83] Sarat Chandra quoted in Acharya, ibid.
[84] Salkar, op.cit., 31

determining the content and curriculum of modern education. Tagore did not give much attention to the political nature of the state and schools and the values imparted by them. Nonetheless, he rightly pointed out the significance of a learning environment for children to grow freely and creatively, but he conceived of this environment as an island (i.e. a *Tapovan*) within the modern national and international system, rejecting implicitly any attempt to criticise or even comprehend the system in its political relationship to the power of different groups or nations. He was also right to point out the need for introducing new teaching methods which are supported by modern psychology. His reflections on teaching methods stressing play, group learning, flexible class organisation and mother-tongue education were valuable contributions.

All three thinkers, Tagore, Bhattacharya and Mukhopadhyaya advocated a very different theory of education from that of their colonial rulers, one that was much less Western, but not 'popular'. It was Gandhi who provided a fundamentally different, and alternative discourse on education and its role in national reconstruction. If Tagore's goal was the identification of methods and conditions of freedom in which a child learns about his or her environment and culture, Gandhi wanted to develop a financially self-supporting, popular, democratic and vernacular context of education in which children will not only understand their culture, but also learn the basic skills of craft and literacy together, their scientific principles, and the ethics and politics of community service and social management. Gandhi's keen political sense as a national leader, and his personal experience as a teacher on Tolstoy farm in South Africa complemented Tagore's poetic awareness of moral and spiritual freedom. Gandhi's attitude towards education was facilitative rather than directive and was not imposed from outside. His notion of *swaraj* (self-rule) and *swadeshi* (indigenous) essentially entailed a political education in *satyagraha* i.e. positive communicative action in the proper sense of the word. *Swaraj* consisted in recovery of a 'public sphere' seen as an arena of practical involvement and training in self-development towards an autonomous, cooperative, and self-sustaining society. In this scheme, formal elementary education was supposed to be organised according to the practical and immediate needs of the community as felt by the local people. '*Swaraj*' was not possible in an exploitative society as it negated 'self-rule' and denied equality to subordinate groups. As Gandhi wrote: 'The pilgrimage to Swaraj is a painful climb. It requires attention to details. It means vast organising ability, it means penetration into the villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words, it means national education that is education of the masses. It means an awakening of national

consciousness among the masses'[85]. In fact, *swaraj* meant self-rule, and hence, education in self-rule and self-management was crucial for Gandhi. In a speech in November 1920 he said:

> It is my firm conviction that the main reason why the present regime goes on and continues to perpetuate the atrocities it does, is that we have come under the spell of its education. Before its intrusion we were self-reliant and not dependent as we are today.[86]

> Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surrounding to the exclusion of the more remote. ... In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics, I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting.[87]

On the cultural level, *swaraj* meant thinking in native terms, about personal and social needs, on the basis of history, culture and language of one's own community. Gandhi believed that Rammohan Roy and Tilak would have been even greater scholars and reformers, were they not induced to disseminate their thinking in English. Thus he wrote: 'No doubt they both gained from their knowledge of the rich treasures of English literature. But these should have been accessible to them through their own vernaculars. No country can become a great nation by producing a race of translators'.[88] He believed it was a myth to believe that only 'knowledge of English' could help Indians to imbibe the ideas of liberty and modern science.[89] In response to Tagore's emphasis on making the East-West relationship reciprocal and his apprehensions that Gandhi's call for 'non-cooperation' and renouncing English would be a retrograde step which would suffocate national life owing to the lack of fresh air from the West, Gandhi replied: 'I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any'[90]. Gandhi was not against English, but he hated the idea that any foreign language should just continue to dominate the system of education. Gandhi always acknowledged that he had benefited from the great treasury of English literature. Gandhi acknowledged: 'Knowledge of English is necessary to us for the acquisition of modern knowledge, for the study of

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[85] Gandhi quoted in Acharya (1997), op.cit.
[86] quoted in Krishna Kumar (1992), 121
[87] M.K. Gandhi (1919), 'On Swadeshi', Young India (21.06.1919), republished in Gandhian Perspectives, Vol. VII, No. 1, (1994), 1-7
[88] M.K. Gandhi, Collected Works, Vol. XX, (1966), 42-43
[89] ibid.
[90] M.K. Gandhi (1939), Hind Swaraj , 267

modern literature, for knowledge of the world ... and such other purposes. As things are we have to learn English even if we do not wish to. English is an international language'[91]. However, Gandhi also held that 'the present of English is no credit to us and that it is not conducive to the growth of a true democratic spirit'[92]. He argued that it was not only 'absurd' but also 'undemocratic' that millions should learn a foreign-tongue for the convenience of a few hundreds of officials.

Gandhi was perhaps the only Indian leader who anticipated that developments taking place under the British *Raj* would make the people of India lose all their control over national affairs including its social policies, ideas, language and identity. He could anticipate the dangers of an increasing gap between the traditional rural masses and the Westernized urban elites. Thus he gave a call for popular mass education both through formal schooling and political participation. Participation of masses in every activity was central to his alternative development model based on the village economy. The essential basis of such a society was improvement in the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, communication, and persuasion. This required the local communities to learn the basic skills in essential industry and speech communication towards self-sufficiency and autonomy both in politics and economy. For this, public participation, mass education and the use of the vernaculars were central. Gandhi considered that popular education based on mass communication forms was necessary to relieve the people of their ignorance about the modern state, its laws and institutions, which had left them behind making them feel alienated. In a situation of ignorance and alienation, all laws and systems of governance were useless for the people. He believed that when education becomes an instrument of dominant groups with vested interest in it, it loses its capacity to train individuals develop rational-judgement skills. Public participation in *swaraj* requires that each individual has an unrestrained ethical autonomy to exercise reason and choice rather conform to some pre-decided pedantic knowledge.

With the disappearance of the traditional caste-based functional socialisation in mutual learning and communication between the old artisan-workers and new learners, between the literates and the illiterates, the country had fallen into intellectual and moral despondency. According to Gandhi, the traditional institutions were breaking up, and were being hastily replaced by ill-adopted modern institutions with foreign values without getting people involved or socialised. In fact, the spread of modern 'elitist' education and

[91] Gandhi quoted in R.N. Srivastava (1994), 97
[92] ibid.

literacy on a limited scale had accentuated the exploitation of the 'illiterate' landless peasantry by the literate peasantry, feudal lords, upper-castes, landowners, moneylenders, traders and lower level revenue officials[93]. Gandhi argued that if the primary duty of the modern state is to provide protection to individuals, then it was necessary that the state should educate all its citizens and people about its laws and functions, and its duty towards citizen-subjects. Amidst ignorance, state-laws and its institutions make no sense.

Gandhi found the existing system of education defective on three counts. (a) It was based on an alien culture, almost to the exclusion of the indigenous language, traditions and social practices. (b) In its exclusive emphasis on intellectual and technocratic - managerial training, it had completely ignored the culture of the heart which is character and the culture of hands in artisanal and manual skills. (c) A popular, creative and useful education was at variance with foreign models of education, influenced by the social and educational philosophies of rich colonial countries which were divorced from the actual needs of a disadvantaged majority[94]. Gandhi believed that technical and pedantic learning based simply on the 3Rs, was unhelpful for the majority of disadvantaged groups in India. Learning based on literary reading and abstract principles, though quite useful for the modern world dominated by a techno-managerial ruling class, had no benefit for the India's majority. Hence mainstream schools returned students from lower-class backgrounds as failures. Most school drop-outs in India still come from these backgrounds, while a few who climb the ladder are permanently alienated from their sub-culture.

In 1936 Gandhi put forward his own alternative scheme of mass elementary education - 'Basic Education' or *'Nai Talim'* as he called it. His scheme was quite different from the philosophical ideas of both the Romantic tradition and the Brahminical tradition. Gandhi emphasised a different aspect of learning usually ignored by earlier discussions. He emphasised that artisan-apprenticeship skills, manual training and related discourses should be the central and main basis of all primary and elementary education. He believed that in a largely agrarian and poor society like India, communication and manual skills related to artisanal work and vocational training could be the most profitable form of popular education. This was the philosophical basis of his 'Basic Education' scheme.

The consensus of opinion among the then existing elites including officials, nationalist leaders and intelligentsia was that high 'illiteracy' (approximately 90%) was

[93] D.N. Dhanagare (1980), 'Literacy and Structural Change in Rural Society in Colonial India', Journal of Social Studies, No. 7, 45-64

[94] Acharya (1997), op. cit.

incompatible both with democracy and with India's aspirations to be a modern nation. There was however, also the realisation that inadequate finance would be the greatest stumbling block towards mass education. Gandhi noted:

> ... as a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfill our obligations to the nation in this respect in a given time during this generation, if the programme is to depend on money. I have therefore made bold, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, to suggest that education be self-supporting. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching him a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the state take over the manufacture of these schools. I hold that the highest development of the mind and soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as it is done today but scientifically, i.e. the child should know the why and wherefore of every process.[95]

Significantly, handicraft-artisan based manual skills and discourses were not simply an extra addition to the existing curriculum. It was a radically different conception. Gandhi's scheme included values, attitudes and texts related to the dignity of labour, particularly manual skills associated with the life of subordinate groups. He knew that in such a school, unlike children being forced to work on farms by their parents for family income support, they would enjoy work as a purposeful activity which would combine and integrate learning with training and earning. He wanted such education to be run on a community basis, making it financially self-supportive through profit-yielding useful productive work. According to Gandhi, 'the manual training will not consist in producing articles for a school museum, or toys which have no value. It should produce marketable articles. The children will not do this as children used to do under the whip in the early days of the factories; they will do it because it entertains them and stimulates their intellect'[96]. The pedagogic objectives of Basic Education can be summarised as follows:

> The central place in the Basic curriculum was to be given to craft. ... Moreover, it was not meant to be taught merely as an additional subject in the curriculum; education was meant to be in and through craft. The academic subjects which were far richer than traditional curriculum and which included mathematics, social studies, general science, drawing, Hindi and music, were to be correlated as much possible to the central handicraft and the physical and social environment. Basic education envisaged a production-cum-activity model of pedagogy[97].

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[95] Gandhi, 'Education' in Harijan, July 1937, quoted in John Kurien (1983), Elementary Education - Myth, Reality, Alternative, 45

[96] Gandhi quoted in Acharya (1997), op.cit.

[97] Kurien (1983), 50

Thus true education consisted in acculturation and training of the whole person, by which he meant the 3Hs rather than the 3Rs: 'heart' (character), 'hand' (practical skills) and the 'head' (mind). By education of the 'heart', he meant training the 'character' and spiritual or moral advancement which he placed above all knowledge whether intellectual or vocational. Gandhi's 3H education is not only inclusive but also broader than Paulo Freire's 'problem-posing' education. Here community economics comes first and political economy later, though the essence of both in Gandhian scheme is the same i.e. to make the individual and the community viably independent.

However the ultimate goal of education, for Gandhi, was 'freedom from fear'.[98] 'The oppressed, having internalised the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom'.[99] In order to overcome this fear, freedom first requires that people develop economically, morally and socially. Then it requires that people eject their own oppressor's image and replace it with conviction, autonomy and responsibility. Freedom must be 'pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest of human completion'.[100] This was a truly radical move. Knowledge of productive handicrafts including such as weaving, spinning, leather-work and pottery in India had earlier been associated with lower caste groups. Knowledge and skills possessed by them were never considered 'worthwhile knowledge' by the upper-castes. In fact, we are still so heavily influenced and habituated to the dominant type of schooling that we find it difficult to understand and imagine the Gandhian scheme of education which is based on discourses of vocational-groups. The notion that knowledge and intelligence are personal endowments or personal achievements, and that schools can impart only such print-based knowledge is a 'great conceit' of the dominant intellectual class in the same way 'as that of the commercial class' which thinks 'wealth is something which they personally have wrought and possess'.[101]

John Kurien has argued that the Gandhian scheme of 'Basic Education' was 'an inappropriate model of mass elementary education, leading to its eventual failure since it frustrated the aspirations of its more ambitious beneficiaries'.[102] He further writes that 'although Basic education was in theory qualitatively better than its literary counterpart and

[98] Julian Brotherton (1993), Gandhi and Western Education Today, 7
[99] Freire (1972), 23
[100] Freire, op.cit., 23-24
[101] John Dewey (1927), The Public and its Problems, 211
[102] Kurien, op.cit., 69

had been specifically designed to improve the lot of the rural masses, the recipients were themselves not very keen on receiving its benefits - in fact it came in for a good deal of opposition from the masses'.[103] He also cites the example of Bihar, where a few Basic and post-Basic high schools were started. However, the University authorities had refused to recognise these students unless they also passed the mainstream High School Examination of the State Board. Kurien holds, mistakenly in my opinion, that the Gandhian scheme as inappropriate and hence a failure. In fact Kurien is wrong to think that the Gandhian scheme of 'Basic Education' was ever institutionalised, ever given a practical shape, and ever introduced on a mass scale. The significant point is, the Gandhian scheme was never fully implemented in its proper form. What Kurien calls an 'institutionalised Basic Education' on a 'diluted but mass scale' was not actually Basic Education at all in the proper sense. The government adopted only a few aspects of handicraft training as one of many subjects rather than as the central basis of the entire curriculum. Secondly, what Kurien considers to be non-acceptance and non-recognition of 'Basic Education' cannot be imputed to the scheme itself. While the previously existing public school system and other mainstream type government schools continued for the well-off sections, a few experimental 'Basic Schools' were opened in rural areas. Within such a pyramidal structure of education system, any radically different sub-system or 'Basic Education', however sound be in principle, was bound to fail. Historical experience suggests that people who have always been disadvantaged can not accept an education which is likely to be undervalued by the State as well as by the elite. Gandhi wanted to have a uniform elementary education, with diversified and specialized higher education for all throughout the country so that children could be initiated into the right kind of educational discourse and training which would suit the Indian society and the nation at large.

As far as adult education is concerned, Gandhi said in a speech in 1945 that it should be an 'education for life' through 'close association with life'. 'Education for life' did not mean 'education for the duration of life, but education for the sake of life. ... Adult education is a matter of teaching the art of living'[104]. By the phrase 'education through life' he meant that knowledge for adults can not be imported from the outside, that all adult education programmes must focus on the communicative functions of language and life-experiences of learners. This also implied that learning must necessarily be carried out in

[103] Kurien, op.cit., 70

[104] quoted in Marjorie Sykes (1988), The Story of Nai Talim, 51; also, Kumud Sinha (1995), Education: Comparative Study of Gandhi and Freire, 211

the mother-tongue, also a basic principle of his 'Basic Education' scheme. 'Without the capacity to speak effectively and to read and write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas'[105]. Like Tagore, Gandhi was in favour of mother-tongue instruction up to the highest level of education. However, unlike Tagore, Gandhi would not allow English teaching in schools until the age of fourteen. Gandhi was categorical in his opposition to English as a medium or as a compulsory subject until this age. He did not want the vernaculars to lose their communicative capacity to flourish and educate the masses[106].

Gandhi's democratic egalitarianism and faith in public capacity had distanced him from the dominant modernist bloc within the nationalists. Gandhi was sidelined for being less practical and unmodern for the future India. Gandhi was not against the spirit of scientific enquiry or modernity as such but it could be argued that he was averse to the ideology of a Western-type modernity. The very idea of being 'modern' and pursuing 'modernity' was 'essentialist' and 'Eurocentric'. The 'modernist' bloc within the nationalist group and the Congress saw themselves as representing a few at the top orders of Indian society and found the Gandhian scheme too demanding. From the 1930s and 1940s, it had become obvious that there were major differences between these two blocs i.e. mainly the Gandhian and the Nehruvian blocs. By 1945 the Nehruvian modernisation programme held sway over the nationalist agenda. We will now move to our next chapter to analyse and discuss Nehru's perspective which formed the basis of his policies after 1947.

[105] Wardha Scheme on Basic National Education - 1937 quoted in R.S. Mani, op.cit., 68
[106] Ambashankar Nagar (1970), *Rashtrabhasha Hindi Aur Gandhiji* , 41

Chapter 3

Public Policy Goals: Education And Literacy

1. NEHRU AND EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC POLICY GOALS ON EDUCATION

The debate between Gandhi and Nehru was essentially a part of the tradition-vs.-modernity debate raised by the colonial and nationalist struggle, and which the modernists saw this conflict in terms of a simple and indolent dichotomy between an unchanging tradition and fast-changing modern period. Sudipta Kaviraj writes: 'Gandhi, without whom the success of Indian nationalism would have been inconceivable, offered criticisms which were mostly ignored rather than seriously answered. Gandhi's doubts about the feasibility and the actual consequences of introducing a westernized modernity were not seen as a set of valid, or serious, historical questions, but as personal fads to be indulged and ignored at the same time'.[1]

After independence, Nehru as the Premier developed his first policy perspective on the public role of the state, and pushed forward his West-inspired modernist vision which focused on economic priorities[2]. Until his death in 1964, he remained in favour of an elitist model of development and provided the nation a rationale for his 'economistic' modernist vision, which in reality suited the needs of only the big cities and modern industries, rather than the villages and the masses. In this vision, mass literacy and mass education were considered to be secondary, as optional extras, which could be given serious budgetary and planning consideration only when the basic problem of strengthening the national economy had been dealt with. Earlier the British had postponed the burden of educating the masses. Now Nehru also did the same thing on the same pretext. 'Transfer of Power' from the British to the Indian hands is a phrase which itself 'implies considerable continuity with the past'[3]. Gandhi found the general 'ignorance' and 'alienation' of the masses rather more alarming than 'illiteracy'[4]. In contrast, Nehru approached the problem of 'illiteracy' purely in technical and functional terms and considered lack of knowledge of the 3Rs and modern professional skills as a stumbling block to modernity.

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[1] Sudipta. Kaviraj (ed.) (1997), Politics in India, 19-20

[2] There are numerous studies which accept that Nehru's priorities were mainly and primarily economic which concentrated on development of heavy and basic industries under the public sector which were intended to serve the growth of corporate order. See Bipin Chandra (1966), The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India ; S Kaviraj (1994), 'Crises of the Nation-State in India', Political Studies, Vol. 42, 115-129

[3] F.R. Frankel, 'Decline of a Social Order' in S. Kaviraj (ed.) (1997), 370

[4] R.S. Mani (1961), Educational Ideas and Ideals of Gandhi and Tagore , 102

The correspondence between Gandhi and Nehru in 1928-45 shows that there were major differences between them on the question of state-sponsored modernity. In 1928 Nehru told Gandhi: 'You misjudge greatly, I think, the civilization of the West... rather industrial civilization is bound to conquer India, maybe with many changes and adaptations, but none the less, in the main, based on industrialism'. A week later, Gandhi replied: 'The differences between you and me appear to me to be so vast and radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us' and 'that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views'[5]. Gandhi wanted their differences to be made public but Nehru did not agree. He and the Congress continued to attack the Gandhian idea of '*Swaraj*' from within[6]. Nehru found it difficult to understand how a village could become the centre of development with 'truth' or *satya* (read as negotiated consensus), 'non-violence' or *ahimsa* (read as ways of dialogue) and '*satyagraha*' (read as communicative action) as its guiding principles. True to his convictions, Gandhi used a traditional language for mass communication and for redistributing the functions of modern political and educational institutions. On the other hand, Nehru taking a rather too general and literal meaning of these traditional categories, once asked Gandhi: 'I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from such an environment. Narrow minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent'.[7] Nehru's incomprehension as well as apprehension was rooted in his assumption that only a Western form of rationality, and English education, could help develop the nation towards regeneration. According to Nehru, India could sustain her Independence only by way of technological advancement where villages would 'approximate more to the culture of the town'[8] and education and literacy would have to be instrumental in bringing about that change. Thus a strong nation-state, not Gandhian democratic and self-reliant small economies, built on big business and big politics lay at the centre of the overall policy frame of Nehru.

It was Nehru's *The Discovery of India* and *Letters from Prison* which had become the blueprint for both the Congress and the government's public policy. While he produced a grand narrative of India's cultural past constructed on the idea of 'unity in diversity', his

[5] see Chaturvedi Badrinath (1991), Dharma, India and the World Order - Twenty Essays , 156
[6] ibid.
[7] quoted in B.M. Bhatia (1988), Gandhi-Nehru Polarity: Building Hunger-Free India after Independence, Monograph , 7-8
[8] ibid.

future vision was based essentially on premises of Western 'modernity' which prioritised economic development based on modernisation theory.[9] Along with modernisation of the 'big economy', building up defense-base and security and technical education were also emphasised. The Gandhian scheme of mass education and development which appeared to them 'obsolete and conservative', were rejected[10]. Initially in this process of change, the educated and enterprising sections of society were supposed to lead the masses, representing the interests of the nation as a whole. Rather than arguing against Gandhian principles in public, Nehru and his Congress castigated it as abstract, impractical and conservative[11]. Nehru did not provide an alternative theory, but instead reinstated the modernist argument to support his policies. Public policy under Nehru in many fields can best be seen as a continuation with the British Raj.[12]

During late 1930's and early 1940's, the National Planning Committee under the chairmanship of Nehru recommended a broad liberal curriculum for elementary education in which much emphasis was given to the expansion of facilities for technical and higher education.[13] Thus, less specialised programmes like mass literacy and universalisation of elementary education were to be taken up later, according to Article 45 of the Indian Constitution adopted in 1950. The basic structure of education continued as under colonial administration, though it was expanded 'with a few marginal changes in content and technique'.[14] These minor changes were adopted to gain legitimacy for continuing old policies in the management and control of education. A part of Nehruvian assumption and ideology was that the state and its institutions such as the bureaucracy, schools, laws, etc., based on modern knowledge and rationalistic principles of western modernity were inherently better. These were also more powerful as implements to discipline, organise, educate and train a disorganized, and traditional population. No new consensus was sought to incorporate the educational interests of various communities and regions in order to strengthen their affective bond, i.e. their identity and group allegiance to the national system of education and the nation. Problems of national re-construction such as social and economic justice, accessible equality of opportunity, regional balance, mass literacy and universal elementary education were postponed.

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[9] Poromesh Acharya (1997), 'Educational Ideals of Tagore and Gandhi', EPW, Vol. XXXII, No. 12, 601-606
[10] Krishna Kumar (1991), Political Agenda of Education , 177
[11] see Frankel, op. cit., 374
[12] ibid.
[13] Kumar, op.cit., 179-181
[14] J.P. Naik (1965) quoted in J.B.G. Tilak (1990), Political Economy of Education in India, Special Studies in Comparative Education, No. 24, 12

Ordinary people were asked to be patient in aspiring for education and employment as the magnitude of these problems was too large for a backward society like India. Also, the discursive strategies followed by this elite were supposed to show people their responsibilities towards the nation-state and to prepare them to face the challenges arising out of its backwardness.[15] For example, if the nation-state fell into a crisis, the people were to be held responsible for any such failure. However, on the other hand, the state's responsibility towards its subjects was not emphasised in the curriculum of schools. Schools and adult literacy programmes were primarily supposed to socialise citizens in the values of patriotism and national integration rather than a differentiated national identity. These secondary, state-based discourses as found in the school curriculum and educational debates were, for the most part, supposed to promote a subordinate literacy producing law-abiding citizens. Nehru's government ignored and discouraged all discussions about unresolved contradictions[16] of social inequality, of regional disparity, of the people's plural identities and unfulfilled aspirations which he had pledged to tackle in his 'Tryst with Destiny' speech, on the eve of independence. The response of the Nehru government was 'incomprehensibly unsympathetic ... due to understandable anxiety that more homogeneous regional units might lead to a weakening of the political imagination of the Indian nation'.[17]

Nehru never achieved what he as a premier aspired for, though between 1947-64, his achievements in the economic and agricultural sphere were impressive.[18] In the educational sphere too there was enormous growth in the number of schools and colleges, but their success was limited to main urban-based elite institutions which whole-heartedly adopted English education, Western mannerisms and values. How much education and development of rural India would also have contributed to national economic growth, stability, and self-reliance and general progress, has never been seriously considered by the governing elites. In India of the majority, Nehru failed in absolute terms in his Community Development Project, Panchayati Raj institutions, mass elementary education and in the integration of tribal and other disadvantaged groups in the mainstream life and prosperity

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[15] F.R. Frankel (1978), India's Political Economy, 1947-77 ; L.I. Rudolph and S.H. Rudolph (1987), In Pursuit of Lakshmi . Rudolph and Rudolph characterise the Nehru regime as 'non-authoritarian command politics' by which he means a situation where 'the preferences of political leaders and bureaucrats largely determine investment decisions and policy'.

[16] For an analysis of school curriculum and its content see Shalini Advani (1996), 'Educating the National Imagination' in EPW, Vol. XXXI, No. 31, 2077-2082; and Krishna Kumar (1989), Social character of learning

[17] Kaviraj (ed.) (1997), 225

[18] For an evaluation of Nehru's performance and achievements, see Rudolph and Rudolph (1987)

of the nation. The main critique of Nehru's policy focuses on the neglect of institutions of mass cultural reproduction such as universal education and mass literacy. In a country of seventeen major languages, thousands of spoken dialects and nearly a billion people, educating a poor and backward nation has been one of India's greatest challenges and failings. With such a huge task of educating its vast population with diversity of culture and language, Nehru based his policy on a superstitious belief in the powers of technology, and a narrowly conceived economic growth. Despite his awareness of the new caste or class created by colonial education, Nehru only hastened to expand and strengthen the position of this class. This he did by broadening horizontally the national base for scientific and technical education. In contrast to colonial education, he made education in India an input for the economic productive system. Though it opened up some avenues for the middle-lower classes, the very structure and nature of the education system remained elitist. The social fate of the majority and the general cultural reproduction processes were 'left to the violence and malignancy of both a vicious market and unprincipled state manipulation'[19]. After Nehru, subsequent educational policies have developed on the basis of minor modifications to previous unsuccessful policies.

Numerous independent education commissions and committees (some discussed below) have been set up after Independence. However, as we shall see, there has not been a single independent committee focused exclusively on elementary education until 1993. The first independent commission set up after independence was on university education, the second on secondary education, while the third was concerned with education as a whole. The first was the University Commission (1948-50) under Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, since the reorganisation of higher education was considered the most important task for gearing the nation towards economic modernisation. Apart from concentrating on higher and technical education, the Commission also recommended welfare provisions for students in higher education by means of scholarships to talented aspirants from relatively poor backgrounds. It also recommended that language development be based on a three-language formula - i.e. a regional language, one federal language of another region or state, and thirdly English. English was expected to be replaced only later when a national substitute was agreed upon. Nothing was done until 1956 when the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) advised the states to implement these policies in a few schools on an experimental

[19] S. Kaviraj (1992), 'Writing, Speaking and Being: language and the historical formation of identities in India', in Herausgegeben von Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanaygam und Dietmar Rothermund (ed.) *Nationalstaat und Sprrachkonflikte in Sü- und Südostasien*, 25-65

basis. Concerning the non-formal education of rural adults, the Commission recommended the establishment of '*Janta*' Colleges or '*Vidyapeeths*' (rural universities). Though it rightly emphasised the requirements of rural industry and skills, information and communication, no plans were initiated at all[20].

Next was the Secondary Education Commission (1952) which was necessitated by the widespread feeling that universities were not getting properly trained students for professionally diversified courses and skills. Hence it was felt necessary that secondary education should re-orientate its students entering higher education to a variety of diversified subjects which would provide them with substantive knowledge about higher professional courses and degrees. The concerns of both these commissions reflect a high premium on investment returns in education, mainly in economic terms. However, despite some minor recommendations for other areas in education, only higher and secondary education received large shares of the funds under the various Five-Year Plans which will be discussed later. As a result there has been a mismatch, and rapid uncontrolled expansion in these sectors of education. As Philip G. Altbach has observed, 'Indian higher education has grown by accretion in the past quarter century, and there has been little clear planning based on either the needs of the broader society as defined by the government in the various Five Year Plans or the wishes of the academic community' [21]. The unplanned expansion of higher education resulted in the general deterioration of quality in education with simultaneous increases in the numbers of those with skills, creating a glut in the labour market, under-employment and unemployment[22].

Later, in 1958, in view of the recommendations made by the educational panel of the Planning Commission of India, the Government set up a National Committee on Women's Education under Srimati Durgabai Deshmukh. This study was occasioned by the felt need to encourage women to participate in higher education and hence it was asked to suggest special measures for women's enrollment at primary and secondary levels. The Report, submitted in 1959 observed that the factors which obstructed women's entry at all levels of education were often beyond their control, and also, very often, it was the 'double standard' of social laws that was largely responsible for their situation.[23] The Committee also pointed out the die-hard male attitude which often discouraged women's education.

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[20] J.C. Aggarawal (1992), Education Policy in India: 1992 ; K.M. Vatsyayan (1972), Some Aspects of Cultural Policies in India

[21] Philip Altbach (1982) quoted in Tilak (1990), 15-16

[22] ibid.

[23] Report of the National Committee on Women's Education - 1959 in A Source Book of Adult Education, DAE, (edited by S.Y. Shah), (1989), 175-184

The Committee recommended special educational facilities for women, with extra orientation courses made available as part of their continuing education. The Report emphasised special measures, like special hostel facilities and scholarships for ensuring women's entry and retention at all stages of education until the social outlook had changed. However, the level of female enrollment in schools remains the lowest for all regions and all communities in the country even today.

There was yet another committee, the most significant of all, called the Committee on Emotional Integration (1961-62) which appears to have received no attention either from the government or from any other public agency, the media or the academic community. This Committee was set up on the recommendations of the Conference of Education Ministers of States in November 1960 to examine the role of education in the promotion of the emotional integration of all citizens, and all parts of the country, towards a coherent and plural idea and identity of the nation-state. The Report was quite significant although it made only general recommendations for a multicultural and multilinguistic re-orientation of the educational system. The Committee did not deliberate on issues like electoral or popular consensual bases for institutional structures of the state and its ideological apparatuses. For example, socio-political arrangements adopted by Nehru's government which were essentially born out of a specific reading (by Nehruvians) of the history of European modernity were not re-examined in the light of independent India's experience. The language and grammar of Western political and educational models which were unintelligible to ordinary Indians, and cultural ideas which provide a supporting historical thinking, never came into serious critical reappraisal by this Committee. Issues specific to adult education and mass literacy were linked to occupational and economic interests of common people but these too were stated in general terms:

> Next to technical and primary education very high priority should be accorded to adult education programmes ... *It is ultimately the economic development of the people that goes to promote national integration*, and one of the biggest obstacles in bringing about such a development rapidly is the alarming extent of illiteracy ...
> ...adult education should ... ensure *that men and women, in addition to acquiring additional vocational and technical skills, are given a general education which will foster in them a sense of abiding values and the faculty of critical judgement. To discount prejudice and arrive at a balanced view in all matters should be one of the first lessons taught in adult education...*
> ...the best means of rousing and retaining the interest of people is an appeal to their *desire for economic security*. We, therefore, are of opinion that the education being

organised for adult population should also be further education which stems mainly from *individual interests - economic, cultural and social.*[24])

The Committee did not spell in detail how both 'abiding values' and 'critical judgement' can be fostered, and how 'desire for economic security' can generate and sustain people's interest in literacy. However, the Committee also emphasized education of women. It argued that in a fast changing economic world, women in large numbers (about 42 million in the early 1960s) wished to work outside in order to supplement their family income, and that with growing industrialisation, modernisation, and the development of trade, commerce and services, their number was likely to increase. Because of the invaluable services they rendered at home and/or outside the home, women were essentially the backbone of the national economy. Thus it recommended special provision for women to enable them to improve their skills and interests in a variety of jobs and occupations. The Committee, however, laid a very significant emphasis on raising the quality of teaching in adult education centres which, our field-study would show, still remains poor. It pointed out:

> What the adult educator needs is not to handle his audience as if they are passive recipients of information, but to draw them into constructive participation in the discussion groups, lectures and other programmes. Without indulging in commonplaces and oversimplifications regarding the oneness of the people and their glorious past it should be his duty to help the creation of attitudes which eschew prejudice, superstition and intolerance. It is also his duty to organise such activities and aids to education as will attract and hold the attention of adult audiences and help them to improve their skills. The unlettered man feels that in learning to read and write he has something purposeful to gain ...[25]

These recommendations, made by independent national committees, did not receive serious attention from the government because they required reform of both administration and policy with extra allocations of funds and resources. The Committee did point out, though in very general terms, the pedagogical significance of individual learner or citizen's self-esteem, identity and regional cultural patriotism as constituent parts of the educational process.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AFTER NEHRU (1964)

It was only after Nehru that for the first time an Education Commission (1964-66) was established under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari to review all aspects of national

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[24] Report of the Committee on Emotional Integration - 1962 in A Source Book on Adult Education (1989), 185-189 (emphasis added)

[25] ibid.

education. Its Report, titled *Education and National Development,* suggested a blueprint for educational reform, and provided for the first time the general principles of educational policy at all levels. Central to its emphasis was development of modern science as an integral part of all education, and it recommended the vocational reorientation of secondary education. Using Gandhian language for its rhetoric, it recommended the 'introduction of creative activities at the lower- and higher-primary stages' of school education with 'a diversification of secondary school curricula so as to shift the emphasis from a purely literary content to a variety of disciplines and fields' including art, craft and culture[26]. It recommended a comprehensive common school system for enabling an accessible equality of opportunity and provided a modified and graduated three language formula specifying the levels at which different languages were to be taught. It recommended the inclusion of a small amount of Gandhian craft education, not as the main basis but as a separate subject. It was essentially based on the 'human capital' theory (discussed later) in vogue at that time.

The Report called for both a qualitative improvement and a quantitative expansion of educational facilities, answering the needs of the national economy. Though it pointed out the social and cultural frailty of the existing system of education, it remained silent on the actual processes, content and methods in education which would rectify its shortcomings. It failed to point out that there were real limits to the power of purely economy-need based education. For example, the modern economy, based on industrial production and shared by both the state and private sectors, was believed to create and expand the labour market which would require new trained skills. Actually, this happened only on a limited scale and only in certain pockets of the country. This has limited the rate and scale of social mobility and as a consequence, there has been a sharp growth in the rate of migration and urbanisation.

Even at a nominal level, the main recommendations of the Report, especially vocationalisation of secondary school education, establishment of a common school system and reassessment of educational planning and the manpower needs of the nation, remain unattended.[27] In fact, the recommendations of the Kothari Commission have been grossly neglected. The only change in the structure of school education which received some attention was the introduction of a diversified higher secondary course, but the main agenda of universal, free, and compulsory elementary education remains unachieved.

[26] Vatsyayan, op.cit., 26-28
[27] Aggarawal, op.cit.

Aware of the limitations and inefficiency of the government, the Commission was doubtful if these objectives would be achieved even by 2000 AD. It recommended that a simultaneous nation-wide campaign for adult literacy should be initiated. It observed *that in a democracy, the function of adult education is to 'provide every adult citizen an opportunity for education of the type which he wishes and which he should have for his personal enrichment, professional advancement and effective participation in social and political life'.*[28] In effect, however, the advice offered to the government by these independent commissions but few of their recommendations have been implemented.

However, the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) at its 32nd Meeting in 1965 was quick to take up the issue of adult education, and charted an innovative 'non-formal' method to match the needs of the Green Revolution launched in the same decade. There was nothing conceptually new about this plan, except that the term 'adult education' was changed to 'social education' in order to make it a continuous programme in life-long education through non-formal media for the adult population. So, for a brief moment, adult education was called social education with inclusion of some diversified programmes in community projects such as one patterned on *Gram Shikshan Mohim* or the village education development started in Maharashtra, and the Farmers Training and Functional Literacy Project (FTFLP) based on the UNESCO - designed Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP). These projects were in operation during the second half of the 1960s. In Bihar it was reported that in 120 centres where this project was taken up it did not take off owing to the absence of well trained personnel and locally relevant curriculum as the latter were mainly developed by Resource Centres in either Lucknow or Calcutta. In fact, in the 'absence of infrastructural facilities for training and local expertise', Bihar 'could not even give a fair trial to the FTFL project'[29]. The farmers' training in functional literacy, that is, learning the use of marketed agricultural commodities with a few scientific concepts in high-yielding practices of manure and fertilisers, remained narrow. Alien words like *'khadya utpadan'*, (food production) *'khanij padartha'* (natural minerals), *'takniki'* (technology), etc., were not only difficult to learn and understand, but the entire orientation of the training was misguided. Among the local farmers it created an illusion of superior knowledge provided by the language of 'High Yielding Production' (HYP) techniques that were in effect the sale-language of major multinational agro-business companies expanding their market in the early 1960s.

[28] Education Commission 1964-66 in A Source Book on Adult Education, op.cit.
[29] Shah (1989), Adult Education in Bihar , 52

Later, there followed more formal discussion of the Kothari Commission Report in both Houses of Parliament as well as in the Cabinet Committee. At each stage of these debates the actual concerns were diluted by mere words of praise. This was observable in the final resolution of Parliament which became the first national policy on education in independent India. If we compare the size of this policy resolution (only 9 pages) with the size of the Kothari Commission Report (1060 pages), it indicates how much importance the Government attached to its recommendations. The 1968 Policy statement is a small document which is like a resolution rather than a detailed blueprint for national education[30]. The only significant feature of the 1968 resolution is that it emphasised the idea of developing a comprehensive national system of education, but again mass elementary education and literacy received little attention. It had seventeen sub-headings, or subjects, each containing one or two paragraphs of some 60-100 words. Even a cursory glance through these pages would show that various subjects under each 'head' are not well integrated. Each of them appears as compartmentalized subjects of educational concern. Moreover, it does not clarify the priority given to each of these subjects in as detailed a manner as we find in the Kothari Commission Report. In fact, under each 'head', we find similar phrases like 'topmost priority', 'highest significance', and 'serious concern'. For example, 'high priority' is to be given to science education and research, 'special emphasis' is given to education for agriculture and industry, 'strenuous efforts' need to be made for equalising educational opportunity, 'intensive efforts' are needed for education of backward classes and tribal people, 'special emphasis' is to be made on Sanskrit for growth and development of Indian languages, 'every effort' should be made for the development of Hindi, 'special emphasis' on the study of English and other international languages, 'strenuous efforts' for free and compulsory education, and 'energetic development' of Indian languages and literature. These give an impression that the Government attached full importance to all, which in reality, is not possible. The pattern and direction of educational development from 1968 to 1997 reveals that the nature of education in India has continued to be substantially the same as in 1947-68. The cultural and linguistic basis of educational development has remained the same as was conceived by the modernist vision. The most often repeated words in the document are 'development', 'progress', 'integration', 'unity', 'community' and 'national' service where the national economy, science education and research are to receive high priority. Surprisingly, Section 14 on literacy, and adult education does not refer at all to the role of

[30] National Policy on Education 1968, GOI (1977 edition)

language and culture. The main emphasis in this section is on 'participation in the working of democratic institutions', 'accelerating programmes of production' and 'quickening the tempo of national development'. All these phrases have constituted a familiar part of state discourse emphasising a very general, macro rather micro planning in development based on the modernist project.

However, one can notice that for the first time the Government provided a policy statement on education. The 1968 Policy statement is a parliament resolution indicating a new resolve. It recognised and provided a normative framework for policy principles and goals of education in independent India. It did not deal with details of policy matters but contained only policy principles. It provided an outline for the articulation and enumeration of standards for the nation's educational affairs, its politics and policies. It outlined the domain of legitimacy for educational acts of the States and other agencies. This domain of legitimacy defined all that was to be valued for investment in educational planning. Investment in modern science and technology education were the dominant concerns to which all traditional, local and regional skill requirements and aspirations were subordinated. As a policy guideline, it provided for regulated access to the dominant forms of knowledge already in use in the educational system. In addition, it emphasised values like citizenship, national service and development but nothing like the responsibility of the state and its institutions towards the citizen-subjects. It also fixed the limits to be observed, for example, in adopting the language policy for books, curriculum and instruction. Highlighting the significance of the development of regional languages, it stated that 'the energetic development of Indian languages and literature is a *sine qua non* for educational and cultural development. Unless this is done, the creative energies of the people will not be released, standards of education will not improve, knowledge will not spread to the people, and the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses will remain if not widen further'[31]. But this merely produced a slogan about the use of national languages without clearing demarcating their role, nature, and various forms and functions in educational practice.

Although the role of national languages and their development based on the three-language formula, has been emphasised since the early 1950's, studies have shown that the government has been unable to ensure effective implementation of this goal[32]. The goal is laudable as it recognises the right of linguistic minorities to get educational instruction

[31] ibid.
[32] R.S. Srivastava (1994), Bi/Multilingualism , 192

through their mother-tongue. The goal of this scheme is also to promote the major regional language as the official state language for bringing different groups in the region into the socio-cultural mainstream. So the ultimate goal is to bring various groups into the national mainstream, but that has to be on people's terms rather than according to official prescription which causes wastage and suspicion. As we have seen, a major cause of wastage and drop-out in schools is imparting of education in languages other than the mother-tongue. Educational planning has not taken care to develop various mother-tongues with a proper writing script, as in case of the Santhali language of Dumka tribals. Very few mother-tongues enjoy political and cultural prestige even among their own speakers. Besides, there has been no serious attempt to employ them at the elementary or primary level schools. This calls into question actual government commitment to serious investment towards development of these languages. Thus, much of the investment in education at the primary school level in the last 50 years has been a tragic waste. This does not mean that we should go on wasting money and human effort on experiments like this. We should be interested in a genuine, participatory, research-based investment in language development which will facilitate literacy and learning in schools according to the learner's wishes and needs. It is probably because of this lack of understanding of the language-use and education in local people's development that out of 1652 identified mother-tongues in India, the education department officials have adopted only 67 of these languages for educational instruction. There has been a common ignorance on the part of policy makers and officials about the nature and function of grass-roots societal bilingualism that is common in India. The official educators have failed to develop a theory of communicative-language-based, or communicative-grammar-based pedagogy as a scientific discipline by which the gap between traditional and modern forms of knowledge and method of instruction could be bridged.

Educational plans have by and large failed to take into account the structural and functional distinctions between various linguistic codes which are needed for transfer and switch-over between languages. This has hindered the entry of minority dialect-speakers into the mainstream regional languages, and further to national and international languages. The linguistic basis of the Indian educational system is also characterised by many internal contradictions which are self-defeating for its own purposes and goals. For example, English dominates all levels of education, particularly higher education, even though it is a first language, of only a tiny elite. All schools at the lower level are monolingual, particularly rural schools which employ the standard vernacular of the region, while most

good urban schools employ English right from the early stages. A bilingual education is generally absent in schools at lower levels, and none among them operate in a full bilingual fashion. Only in rural areas, some teachers use their own bilingual methods, but bilingual education is not provided as a matter of conscious planning.

However, the 1968 Policy resolution gave the individual states some genuine autonomy over substantive matters of educational policy. This gesture by the national parliament was a remarkable one, allowing the democratic and federal polity to strengthen itself by giving more room to individual groups and regions to discuss and negotiate on the educational needs and issues that concerned them. In all these discussions about the educational needs of various regions and communities, there was the possibility of an expanding role for literacy. Thus Dr. Mudaliar argued: 'to think of education for 500 million people in one common pattern is as dangerous as to think of feeding 500 million people from one centre. That is my strong conviction. There must be variety and diversity in regard to much of what is being done, but there should be one policy in regard to matters pertaining to education, so that all people can and should be educated in the lines on which they seek to educate themselves'[33]. The policy resolution had given education an autonomous identity and created possibilities for institutionalizing a diversified and federated system of education. But the problem with this resolution was that it was too general and lacked any detailed description of the methods and agencies to be involved. Its lack of specificity has given increasing control of educational affairs to the Union Ministry. The educational bureaucracy, dominated by a central machinery around the Cabinet Committee, has continued with its old practice of controlling everything, thus showing lack of faith and disregard for federal officials and local people. Subsequent independent commissions[34] have often pointed out this growing centralisation in the making of educational policies and programmes, but there are no signs of a change in the bureaucratic attitude.

The Education Department has never acquired an autonomous status as a separate industry of social and cultural reproduction. Instead, it has always remained an appendage to national 'economistic' concerns. Since education is under the Concurrent list of the Indian Constitution, it is, in principle, the Parliament which has a sovereign control over public policy in this area. The 42nd Constitution Amendment Act has empowered it to

[33] Indian Educational Documents Since Independence, A Biswas and S Agrawal (eds.) (1971), 487

[34] Two of recent ones are the Yash Pal Committee (1993) on curriculum burden on school children and the Arun Ghosh Committee (1994) , a review of national literacy campaign. Both the committees have pointed about growing centralisation in both planning and implementation of educational schemes.

legislate on matters concerning education concurrently with the states. The concept of 'concurrency' according to National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 has an operational meaning suggesting 'meaningful partnership between Centre and the States', but it places on the Union Government a clear primary 'responsibility regarding the national and integrative character of education, quality and standards, manpower planning, research and advanced study, culture, human resource development and the international aspects of education'[35]. Thus, practically all matters of important public policy concern are vested in the Union Ministry. Within the Department of Education, it is the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), a Standing Committee at the apex (in operation since 1935), which has played a leading role in the evolution and monitoring of educational policies and programmes. In principle, it is CABE which puts up proposals for major policy matters to be approved both by the Cabinet Committee as well as the Parliament, with financial consultations with the Planning Commission. However, CABE itself does not have the independent power to make major changes in policy. It is Parliament with the tacit approval of the all powerful Cabinet Committee, which passes the main framework, guidelines, and directions for any policy change. The deliberations of the independent committees do influence their decision, but such considerations hardly make important concerns of the government, even though it routinely claims to have given full attention to their recommendations. The direction of educational development, and both its achievements and failures, confirm that the colonial structure, in terms of elite training and of social values imparted by the educational system, has been continued by successive governments after Independence. This sits uncomfortably with the goal of universal elementary education.

3. THE PRESENT NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION (NPE) 1986

The 'National Policy on Education', adopted in 1986 calls itself 'new' but, surprisingly, it does not mention specifically the elements that are 'new' in it. This is a long and detailed document, yet nowhere does it discuss the policy elements that are different from previous policies. As we shall see, there is in fact nothing new in it as an idea, nor has it adopted any fresh and an innovative method. The ideas contained in it are the same as in the 1968 Policy with a few borrowings which have been acknowledged. For example, on the question of the three language formula, the government does not recognise the need to re-examine the poor progress of vernacular education. The 1986 policy

[35] Education for All - The Indian Scene (1993), 9-15

document acknowledges: 'The Education Policy of 1968 had examined the question of the development of languages in great detail; its essential provision can hardly be improved upon and are as relevant today'.[36] The 1986 Policy also reiterates the 1968 educational plan expenditure scheme (Section 17) which recommended that it should be raised to at least 6% of the national income, a recommendation which is yet to be realised. The 1986 Policy document also mentions the idea of Rural Universities but this has never received any attention since it was first recommended in 1949.

There is also the idea of establishing model or pace-setting schools which are called Navodaya Vidyalayas to distinguish them from existing elite public schools in each district. Aimed at providing 'good modern education to the talented children predominantly from the rural areas', the 1986 Policy established the idea of opening Navodaya Vidyalayas in which admission for urban children would be restricted to 25% of the total number of places. According to *India 1995*, there were at the end of 1994 about 359 sanctioned Vidyalayas in the country.[37] The idea is not new in any sense except that it has added a new class of model schools in each district. Model or elite schools have existed since the foundation of the public school system before independence, like the Doon School, the Lovedale, the Sanawar, or the Scindia School. Apart from these private 'public' schools, there were some 818 Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central Schools) in 1994-95, which were established as long ago as 1962. The specific aims of Kendriya Vidyalayas, as declared by the Government, were: '(i) to cater to the educational needs of the children of transferable Central government employees including Defence and para-military personnel by providing a common programme of education; (ii) to pursue excellence and set the pace in the field of school education; (iii) to initiate and promote experimentation and innovation in education in collaboration with other bodies like CBSE and NCERT, etc.; and (iv) to develop a spirit of national integration and create a sense of 'Indianness' among children'[38]. After 50 years of Independence, curiously a new class of privileged schools at the cost of mass elementary education, ostensibly for 'meritorious' rural and semi-urban students, has been added to the list of well-supported state-sector schools. The basic policy is the same as the earlier one which actually establishes the myth that merit-based pace-setting model or public schools are indispensable, sidelining the significance of establishing and improving a common school system. As mentioned in the introductory

[36] National Policy on Education - 1986, D/O Education, GOI, 21
[37] India 1995 - A Reference Annual, Publication Division, GOI, 90
[38] ibid.

chapter, recent research both in the West and in India has shown that it is home-based literacy practices (such as story-book reading, letter writing, quizzes, and literate discourses) and the socio-economic background of students which largely determine their success in schools.

Politicians and bureaucrats in India have been more concerned with the relationship of the educational system to the economy as a whole, particularly the ways in which it can produce the right sort of labour force. They see such educational functions at two levels: (a) investment in education proportionate to the required amount of human capital, professional skills and ordinary labour power; and (b) preparing law-abiding citizens for peace and order. In India, the second concern, which specifically targets the ordinary public, has been addressed in a didactic way rather than by means of a ratiocinative, meticulously organised curriculum and instruction focusing on dialogue and discussion. Apart from these two functions, the elite public schools or model schools of both the private and state sectors are mainly supposed to prepare professionals and members of the ruling class elite. Above the poorly provided state schools in rural and semi-urban areas, we have had these large fee-paying private schools for decades. In big cities, almost all upper and upper-middle class children attend such schools. They are the exclusive preserve of those with large incomes. These schools charge between three to five thousand Rupees a month for boarding, which is an average middle class salary in India. On top of it, pupils who can not get admission through proper entry tests, can get through by paying donations, sometimes ranging reportedly from fifty thousand to two hundred thousand Rupees. What these huge fees and donations buy is academic success with entry into elite institutions and universities with their professional skills. Some of these schools have students from lower class backgrounds supported by state scholarships, but their number is negligible.

There has also been increasing differentiation in the educational structure with the introduction of scholarships and assistance available from public funds to the private schools. All these measures have been justified as an extension of parental choice and a restoration of academic opportunities to able children of various backgrounds, rather than providing accessible equality of opportunity to all children of all backgrounds with proper provision for an efficient and comprehensive state school education. In other words, NPE 1986, without questioning the basic premises of the existing system, has accentuated the structural divide in Indian education. The minority elite have one kind of education whereas the majority have one of another kind. So, what is referred to as a crisis in education, is not so much pedagogical in nature, but rather, it is a crisis of social justice

rooted in the fact that governments have failed to provide good schools for the common masses in poorer regions and backward communities. PRASHIKA, the primary education programme of Eklavya, a voluntary organisation working for the last 15 years in Madhya Pradesh, a Hindi-speaking state in central north India, has made the following observation on the state of primary education (1983-94) in poorer and backward regions of the Hindi region:

> Over 70 per cent of our primary schools are understaffed and ill-equipped. There are thousands of primary schools without a teacher, blackboard, toilet or drinking water. There is no clearly formulated primary education policy. Going to primary school simply means learning to read and write, and doing some elementary arithmetic. The socio-cultural and linguistic background of the child is of no consequence to curriculum planning and classroom interaction. Classrooms are therefore characterised by a lack of activity and meaningful interaction between teachers and children. This situation is made worse by utilitarian social expectations and a highly indifferent and repressive administration. There is no space here for teachers to grow or to develop innovative programmes. Of every 100 students who enter Class I, only 32 graduate to Class V. ... The appalling socio-economic conditions in which teachers and children work severely limit innovation and creativity. Poverty forces many children to come to school on an empty stomach. They cannot attend school regularly since they are often needed at home to help with domestic chores or to add to the family income. They have no money to buy books. ... The experiential and cultural background of children rarely gets reflected in school textbooks and teaching strategies. Rural life is often represented as some rare and romanticized specimen.[39]

This description of primary schools and their teaching methods is true for most rural and semi-urban areas in the Hindi region. Most of the meritorious students of this region joining higher education have had the privilege of getting private tuition to aid their hard work, but on the whole the situation is appalling. By declaring a 'war against illiteracy', governments have put the blame on individuals rather than on themselves for failing to institute a coherent and comprehensive policy of educational reconstruction. It would now be interesting to analyse briefly the government's educational planning and investment in terms of budgetary allocation.

4. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT AND PLANNING

It was during the 1960s that the 'human capital' perspective and the 'rate of return' theory, closely associated with the modernisation theory of development, gained currency in developing countries including India, when it was first advocated by the World Bank[40].

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[39] PRASHIKA (1994), 13-15

[40] Ila Patel (1988), 'Policies and Practice of Rural Non-formal Education in India 1947-85, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation , 111

Though it was Alfred Marshal who first emphasised that the 'most valuable of all capital is that which is invested in human beings', during the post-war period this was largely forgotten, until revived by Theodore Schultz in his Presidential address to the American Economic Association in 1960. Schultz argued that education should not be considered merely as a consumption activity, but rather as 'an investment that leads to the formation of human capital, comparable to physical capital, making significant contribution to economic growth'[41]. With the 'human capital' theory gaining currency in economic thought, the modernisation theory of socio-economic development was increasingly pushed for acceptance by policy planners in developing countries. Philip H. Coombs talked about 'literacy crises' in developing countries as a 'world educational crisis' and advanced the idea of non-formal education to counter these challenges, a perspective which was mostly articulated from a developmentalist point of view[42]. According to Ila Patel, the underlying assumptions of the developmentalist perspective were derived from the 'economistic' view of the 'human capital' theory of education which emphasised investment in both the formal and non-formal sectors of education, so that the productive capacity of the entire labour force for economic development could be improved. 'The developmentalist view supports the modernization theory of development, which advocates linear Western models of economic growth for development. It focuses on changing individual characteristics ("traditional" attitudes, values, skills and behaviours) to create a "modern" labor force and citizenry for capitalist development'[43].

The developmentalist perspective with its economistic concern was visible in the Education Commission Report of 1964-66 as well as in the 1968 Policy document which also emphasised the role of non-formal education in the context of development priorities of the time. It was at this time that there was a shift in policy from citizenship training for nation-building to skill training for the modernising economy[44]. Thus, the Commission of 1964-66 stated:

> 'Sustained support and purposeful orientation of literacy programmes depend upon conscious acceptance of certain facts. For instance, it should be accepted that the pace of industrialization and modernization of agriculture and in general of the economic progress of the country is inhibited by the large number of non-literates who constitute the 'work-force'. ... Further, non-literate people tend to resist change and cling to traditional forms of life, while modernization of social life demands revolutionary changes in the accepted pattern. Illiteracy among the masses is inconsistent with the spirit of the age in which scientific and technical progress

[41] Tilak, op.cit., 4
[42] Patel, op.cit., 12
[43] ibid., 13
[44] ibid., 112

> determines the way of life and standards of living. New ideas and new practices cannot be effectively communicated to minds which are untrained to receive them and make use of them. Whether it is family planning or improvement of sanitary standards or any programme of social security or any move which requires change of attitude and habits of life, it must make sense to the people. Similarly it should be realised that uneducated people cannot make a real democracy, the essence of which lies in participation by the people in organised civic life and in important decision-making'.[45]

This perspective, though internally consistent with the dominant development model, accepts the premises of modernisation theory and ignores the contributions made traditionally by non-literates. Governments in developing countries were quick to adopt measures for increased investment in higher education for the labour power needed for economic production. The human capital theory emphasizes equality of outcomes for the well-to-do rather than equality of opportunity for all. In India, where one child in every three lives in abject poverty, education and economic growth should tackle inequality right from the start. The human capital theory does not believe in the equal worth of every human being. It considers some to be more equal than others, and thus it is undemocratic in its nature. Though it emphasizes investment in human beings, by its own logic of efficiency and maximum returns, it encourages investment in profitable and productive skills among those who have the potential (or privilege?) to do so. The human capital theory is right in so far as it points out that in an information-age economy, the most important resource of a company or a nation is not just its raw materials or a secure strategic geographical location, but the quality of skills in its labour market. This perspective, however, allows the state to narrow down its educational investment to cater to the interests of an elite-minority rather than the whole nation. The dynamic nations of the future can only be those that utilize the potential of their entire population.

As was said earlier, Indian higher education, following the theory of investment in human capital, has grown by accretion leading to the deterioration of educational standards, large scale under-employment and unemployment. The advocates of modernisation theory see such problems as quite normal. They argue that it is possible that in many countries the rate of growth of the educational system may exceed the rate of economic growth. Shultz (1986) argued that 'during the process of economic modernization the rate of increase in human capital is higher than that of reproducible physical capital'[46]. India is one such case which has seen massive expansion of unplanned

[45] Education Commission 1964-66, 780-81
[46] Shultz (1986) quoted in Tilak, op.cit., 5

education with general deterioration of educational standards. 'Today the number of pupils in India outnumbers the total population of England, France, Canada and Norway taken together. Every sixth student in the world enrolled at primary, every seventh at the secondary level and every eighth at the tertiary level is an Indian... In all, the Indian educational system produces the third largest professional class in the world, an asset that distinguishes India from other developing and some developed countries'[47]. On the other hand, it also has the dubious distinction of having half the world's total 'illiterate' population. For this reason, the optimism expressed by developmentalists regarding the role of formal and non-formal education is not shared by scholars and advocates of an alternative indigenous model[48].

Notwithstanding government rhetoric, enrollments in schools at the elementary stage have gone up by only about 4.5 times during the period from 1950-51 to 1986-87 whereas those in higher education have increased almost 20 times. The number of unemployed persons who have had at least matriculate education has increased by more than 100 times (i.e. 0.16 million in 1953 to 16.5 million in 1986) suggesting that there is a great mismatch between the manpower requirements of the labour market and investment in higher education. Also, literacy rates in 1991 varied widely according to states/regions, the rural-urban divide, caste and gender. For example, Kerala has the highest literacy rate at 89.81% but Bihar with 38.48% and Rajasthan with 38.55% (two of the BIMARU or 'sick' states of the Hindi region) have the lowest. Rajasthan has the lowest female literacy (20.44% in general; but only 11.6% in rural areas). The lowest male literacy rate is in Bihar (52%). The male and female literacy rates for Scheduled Castes (SCs) are 46% and 19% respectively and the corresponding figures for Scheduled Tribes (STs) are 41% and 18%. Where different forms of deprivation converge, the literacy rate is extremely low; for example, the rate for SC women of Rajasthan is as low as 4.4%. Attendance rates for girls aged 5 to 14 in the rural areas of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, UP and Orissa is less than 25%; and a total of 36 million boys and 42 million girls are estimated to be out of school in 1995 in the country. In UP alone, 8.7 million boys and 9.2 million girls are out of school. Over a million girls are not able to attend schools in rural areas of most Hindi-speaking states. Schooling facilities are poor. Almost 28% of primary schools in the

[47] Tilak, op.cit., 7

[48] see the Special Issue of Comparative Education Review , Vol. 20, No. 3, 1976 on the role of non-formal education and voluntary agencies. Also various alternative models are discussed in this issue.

country in 1986 had only one teacher and most of them have no proper *pucca* (concrete) buildings with two rooms[49].

The Five Year Plan documents too, like the Education Department documents, have emphasised universalisation of elementary education with focus on removing gender, community and regional disparities. The plan of investing six percent of GNP in education has remained unfulfilled. The percentage of GNP invested in education in India is less than the average in developed countries and in the world overall, and even less than the average in some developing countries. According to Tilak, 'it is barely sufficient to provide any meaningful education to a fraction of the current student population in the country'[50]. The 1986 Policy has promised that from the Eighth Five Year Plan onwards, investment in education will uniformly match or exceed six percent of the national income, though it is mainly the political, economic and social lobbies which influence the scale and pattern of resource allocation. The shares of the educational sector in the total plan expenditure have been constantly falling, i.e., 7.86% in the First Five Year Plan, 5.83% in the Second Plan, 6.87% in the Third Plan, 4.9% in the Fourth Plan, 3.27% in the Fifth Plan, 2.7% in the Sixth and with a proposed outlay of 3.55% for the Seventh Plan. Not only has the relative importance of education in the plan expenditure declined, but its share in comparison to other sectors such as Defence, Agriculture, Power, Industry, etc., in any Five Year Plan has been the lowest. An equally important structural disparity is visible in plan priorities for different levels of education. A few relevant data are given below:

Table (A)
GNP (%) Share of Education (India)

1950-51	1.2
1960-61	2.5
1970-71	3.1
1984-85*	3.7
1985-86**	4.0
1986-87 (Budget Estimates)	3.9
* Budget expenditure (actual)	
** Budget (Revised Estimates)	

Table (B)
Share of Education in Five Year Plan Outlays / Expenditures (%) in India

First Plan	1951-56	7.86
Second Plan	1956-61	5.83
Third Plan	1961-66	6.87
Plan Holiday	1966-69	4.60
Fourth Plan	1969-74	4.90
Fifth Plan	1974-79	3.27
Sixth Plan	1980-85	2.70
Seventh Plan	1985-90	3.55

[49] All these figures are quoted from India - 1995 : A Reference Annual ; also see V.K. Ramachandran, *et.al.* in EPW, Vol. XXXII, Nos. 1 and 2 (1997); and Tilak, op.cit., 15-20
[50] Tilak, op.cit., 21

Table (C)

Intra-Sectoral Resource Allocation for Education in the Five Year Plans
(Both Centre and States - Expenditure Outlay in %)[51]

	1st Plan 1951-56	2nd Plan 1956-61	3rd Plan 1961-66	Holiday Pl 66-69	4th Plan 1969-74	5th Plan 1974-79	6th Plan 1980-85	7th Plan 1985-90
Elementary Education*	56	35	34	24	30	35	30	29
Adult Education	3	2	...	...	1	2	4	6
Secondary Education	13	19	18	16	18	17	25	16
University Education	9	18	15	24	25	22	18	12
Art and Culture	++	1	1	1	2	3	4	++
Other General**	7	9	11	10	11	7	12	28
Sub-total	87	82	79	75	87	88	89	89
Technical Education	13	18	21	25	13	12	11	11
Grand Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
% to total plan outlay	7.86	5.83	6.87	4.60	4.90	3.27	2.70	3.55

As one can see in these Tables, although the public expenditure share of GNP spent on education seems to have increased, it falls short of the six percent target. It is not only the educational share in terms of GNP which is important, but also the comparative value of GNP which indicates the real value of resource allocation. The Central Statistical Organisation recently estimated the value of GNP for the year 1988-89 to be Rupees 3068.22 million at current prices and India ranked 115th in the world in terms GNP share of investment in education for the same year. Among the nations with a population of 100 million and over, India was at the bottom of this GNP share value, next to Bangladesh. The share of elementary education has fallen from 56% in the First Plan to 29% in the Seventh Plan. The share of secondary education has remained relatively stable with marginal fluctuations between 13% and 19%. Adult education (mass literacy campaigns such as NAEP and TLC) has received very little attention in all the plan periods. It received 3% of total educational outlay in the First Plan, but subsequently it has mostly been less than or around 1% (see Table C). The highest share it ever received was in the Sixth Plan (4%)

[51] Source: J.B.G. Tilak, The Political Economy of Education in India, 1990, 26.* includes pre-school education; ++ included in 'Other General'; ** includes teacher education, vocational education, etc., and 'Plan Holiday' refers period of 'plan inter-regnum'.

when there was a change in government. The short-lived coalition government led by the Janata Party was concerned about social issues. Similarly, other areas of non-formal education have hardly received any significant attention in terms of budget allocation. Plan shares for higher education have increased from 9% in the First Plan to 25% in the Fourth Plan, with a slight decline afterwards. In real terms, expenditure on higher education has increased ten times during the period 1950-51 to 1979-80 while that for primary education increased barely five times. In the 1990s, there has been a shift in plan allocations after the World Bank warned the Government to curb state subsidies on higher education. Still, the bias is clearly visible when the expenditure per student at various stages is calculated, and here again it shows an iniquitous distribution of resources in different sectors of education. 'In 1986-87 per student expenditure at primary, middle schools and higher education worked out to be Rs. 260.9, Rs 301.4 and Rs. 12,499 per annum respectively. At the same time, composition of unit cost indicates that in primary schools 95 per cent of expenditure per pupil goes as salary component. Less than 2 per cent at primary stage and 3 per cent at middle stage is spent on building, and equipment, etc.'[52] In reality, it is these budget priorities in plan allocations that actually reveal the Indian Government's intention rather than what they pronounce in their policy documents and general plan objectives. The politics of education is clear here. Not only elementary education but also adult education has suffered because of the lobbying pressure of vested interests in bureaucracy and other middle class groups. As a result, those with lower manual skills involved in industry and agriculture remain either 'illiterate' or semi-literate.

Education is a major sector where the state can easily abdicate its responsibility without much social and political cost as there is no lobby to represent the interests of the illiterate, semi-literate or young children. The modernisation obsession of the strong lobby of the corporate sector and intermediate bourgeoisie has now pushed the government towards liberalisation and globalisation of the Indian economy. 'The National Policy on Education (1986) and its subsequent appraisals in 1991 and 1992 seem to be tailor-made to suit the new economic policy' initiated under the aegis of IMF/World Bank in recent years[53]. In the new economic policy, one can see the perceptions of a small minority because of the power they wield elaborated with valid and compelling propositions as the real national interest, and as the real common good,[54] though a recent United Nations

[52] C. Upendranadh (1993), 'Structural Adjustment and Education - Issues Related to Equity', EPW, October 30, 2415-2419
[53] ibid.
[54] C.T. Kurien (1994), Global Capitalism and the Indian Economy , 118-121

sponsored study has pointed out that in India, these economic reforms have only led to a path of 'jobless growth'[55]. The government still views mass literacy and mass education as an optional extra, a luxury which can be pursued only when the basic per capita consumption level is raised. Mass education, literacy and sustainable development is still seen as either a bit cranky or a middle class left-wing obsession, and not as a practical policy. Both the new economic policy and the new education policy have made no shift from the earlier elitist perspective which believed that living standards can be measured solely by consumption and GDP per capita. These elites have never realised that good education is not only good politics but also good business because it contributes to sustainable development, self-reliance and nation-building. Let us now move to a policy analysis of the TLC and see how far it constitutes a renewed effort towards a genuine participatory training.

5. THE TOTAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN (1988): POLICY AND RHETORIC

In India every fresh initiative by the government for the masses, particularly their concern for poverty and the 'illiteracy' alleviation programmes, is rhetorically strengthened with new populist slogans and a re-appropriation of Gandhian themes. This can also be seen in the government's claim about the 'Total Literacy Campaign' (TLC). It proclaims that TLC this time has been 'conceptualised' well and comprehensively 'after a critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the earlier adult education programmes'[56]. There have been no dearth of such 'analyses of the failure of the adult education schemes to fulfill the targets set for them' and hence 'the questions raised by them seem rhetorical rather than illuminating'[57]. Many of these analyses, including the official evaluation reports, offer several possible causes for their failures. They all point to various reasons such as 'malfunctioning or dysfunctioning of adult education centres set up by both government and voluntary agencies; high drop out rates concerning those enrolled in them, non-existence of post-literacy or continuing education arrangements, lukewarm support by state governments or panchayat raj institutions, the employment of untrained functionaries; non-use of scientifically prepared teaching materials and the absence or mismanagement of the infrastructural facilities, not to speak of the non-generation of an 'environment'

[55] 'Jobless growth', The Asian Age , London, (25.04.1997), see editorial page
[56] Education for All - The Indian Scene , DAE, (1993), 63
[57] I. Ramabrahmam (1989), 'Literacy Missions: Receding Horizons', EPW, October 14, 2301; and Nitya Rao (1993), 'Total Literacy Campaigns: A Field Report', EPW May 8, 914-918

conducive to the motivation of prospective and enrolled learners and non-exploitation of the potential of mass media in the learning process'.[58]

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) or TLC was expected to improve upon past experiences by adopting a comprehensive 'campaign approach', and its success (as can be seen from the text extract on TLC in Appendix 1) depends on 'the mobilisation of social forces and on securing people's participation'[59]. NLM/TLC was expected to mark a change by altering the social context of literacy both in terms of 'felt needs' of people and its 'empowering' value for self-sustenance. 'The principal shift in strategy was, therefore, a change from a scattered and piecemeal approach to a well-coordinated, comprehensive and identifiable initiative'[60]. One can partly agree with H.S. Bhola that by the time of the last adult education programme (i.e. National Adult Education Programme, 1978) the Indian government had developed a 'theory of literacy promotion'. Bhola also raises doubts by pointing that 'one can, but, need not be cynical about the rise and fall of literacy promotion in India, and shed tears over the many distortions and contradictions that have been introduced' in their actual practice [61]. He points out that 'the situation of literacy in India is a reflection of the political situation in the country and of the structures of privilege and poverty on which the Indian polity rests'[62]. While he notices a gradual development of government thinking on literacy, Bhola seems to forget that the strength of a theory, particularly in the context of a mass literacy programme, must be seen in terms of ground realities of actual practice and priorities followed by government officials, particularly its rank and file agencies. What is the use and validity of an immaculate conception or a grand project which though internally consistent, never materializes in actual policy?

Bhola offers a judgment that literacy campaigns should not be used for 'quick and dishonest gains' but rather they should foster a 'long-term structural reform' in the interest of people[63]. As our field-study will show, in the actual operation of TLC, huge gaps were found between the theory and practice, between mobilisational aspects of participation and the motivational aspects of learning and sharing. By 'quick and dishonest gains' he primarily means strategies which undermine the 'long-term commitment' of a task-group. Unfortunately, not only the previous NAEP 1978, which Bhola has discussed as a case

[58] Ramabrahmam, op.cit., Arun Ghosh Committee Report - 1994, 6
[59] Arun Ghosh Committee Report- 1994, 5
[60] ibid., 9
[61] H.S. Bhola (1987), 'Adult Literacy for Development in India' in R.F. Arnove and H.J. Graff (eds.) National Literacy Campaigns , 266-267
[62] ibid.
[63] ibid.

study, but also the TLC operations, are found to be orientated towards short-term gains in the basic 3Rs and maintenance of official records for formal accountability. Bhola further points out that campaign based literacy drives or any other state initiatives should not be based on official manipulation but on a 'genuine invitation to people to engage in praxis - the process of reflecting on their reality and acting to transform it'[64]. On the genuineness and seriousness of purpose of these programmes, he says that a campaign should 'be seen as a political definition of mode of planning and of action. It must be have a sense of urgency and combativeness about it. It must be run like a crusade. The commitment must be intense, involvement must be deep, and perseverance must be inexhaustible'[65]. Judged by these significant elements of a campaign, such as honesty, combativeness, long-term commitment and praxis as outlined by Bhola, as well as our own socio-linguistic and cultural perspectives developed in the introductory chapter, it appears that even the present TLC is far from having a genuinely coherent theory of literacy promotion. Concerns about literacy and government publicity about 'war on illiteracy' are often a convenient smokescreen to cover up the state's failure to keep its promises of bringing changes in the educational, social and economic spheres. As a National Literacy Mission (NLM) statement points out:

> 'The concern for and sensitivity to the plight of millions ... *The three important implications of NLM are existence of unmistakable political will and commitment, application of tested and proven scientific and technological research for the benefit of the deprived sections of the society and involvement of all sections of society* ... Viewed in this context, the NLM is ... a national mission, a technology mission and a societal mission. The important strategies to achieve the objectives of NLM include increasing motivation, securing people's participation, increasing involvement of voluntary agencies.'[66]

Before declaring the 'war on illiteracy', the government has clearly accepted that a large majority of the population has remained deprived from much of the development process. However, it does not specify why these people could not become 'effective partners' in the process of national development. Then the passage moves, with no obvious connection, to the three key implications, namely 'political will and commitment', 'application of tested and proven scientific and technological research' and 'involvement of all sections'. All the three certainly constitute key elements of literacy promotion, but neither the passage quoted above, nor the document elsewhere, establish any connection

[64] ibid.
[65] ibid.
[66] Compendium of Instructions on National Literacy Mission D/O Education, (1992) (emphasis added)

between these three. What is more important, and missing here, is some understanding of how each of these three elements is going to be accomplished. Government officials equate participation with general mobilisation, publicity and regular attendance. Mere mobilisation of state resources, of public servants, some volunteers and a good number of adult learners does not constitute 'participation'. Mere physical involvement cannot be said to be participation. The participation of people in shaping their own lives and learning language means enabling them to speak their own minds and words, and not the words of someone else. Here, the sharing of information should not be confused with participation. Participation is synonymous with sharing and learning. Mass meetings, or organised TLC classes, where information on various laws, legal rights, duties and obligations, etc., are passed on, are necessary, though they do not constitute participation in the full sense. Class-instruction, involving a volunteer teacher teaching lessons from a primer may involve interesting forms of personal communication, but that too cannot be said to involve 'participation' unless all the adult learners feel free to share and talk. It cannot be called participation if people keep listening to the commands of those in authority and then submissively do the 'donkey' work. Participation involves dialogue and discourses, with people sharing their own perceptions of a problem, offering their opinions and ideas with opportunities to make decisions and suggestions. Dialogue and discourses can not be possible in an environment where dominance and subordination is acutely visible. With an understanding of literacy development in India, growth of national thinking and evolution of public policy, we will now move to our case studies of TLC in Bihar and Haryana and examine the prospects for growth of adult literacy in a cross-cultural and historical perspective.

Chapter 4

Literacy Development in Bihar

Part One : History of Educational Development

1. INTRODUCTION

An analysis of the pedagogical and political significance of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC-1988) in India with case studies from two states, namely Bihar and Haryana, requires a historical and ethnographic framework. The present and the next chapters are concerned with these two case studies. In the previous chapters, we argued for the need to study literacy in a historical context, particularly in its relationship to the learners' language, identity and discursive culture. The next two chapters have two parts each. In the first part of each of the next two chapters, we will discuss a few relevant aspects of the history of education and literacy development in Bihar and Haryana respectively. This will give us the necessary background for our TLC case studies. We start with a study of Bihar.

Bihar, a Hindi speaking state in the eastern part of India, has a total population of more than 90 million. Though it has 'over 40 per cent of the mineral wealth of the country, the rise of mineral and metal based industries through sizable investments by the central government, and the private sector' have 'had very little impact' on the economic growth and development of the state[1]. Bihar supplies coal to almost all the thermal power plants in the country, yet it has the lowest number of electrified households, i.e. 12.5%, and further, 'in 1981, only three per cent of the total work force was engaged in manufacturing and other household and service industries'[2]. Even after five decades of state planning, Bihar is at or near the bottom of all accepted contemporary indicators of development, including per capita income. It is the most backward state in the country - economically, socially and educationally[3]. Colonial discrimination, developmental neglect, flood, drought, crime and corruption have struck the state almost pathologically, leading to an ever-increasing pressure on land.[4] In the words of T. J. Byres, in Bihar we have a 'paradigm of the extreme

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[1] F.R.. Frankel (1989), 'Caste, Land and Dominance in Bihar' in F.R. Frankel and M.S. Rao (eds.) Dominance and State Power in Modern India - Decline of a Social Order , 46-131

[2] Pamela Phillpose (1994), 'Learning to Cope', Expression, Indian Express, September 4; also Frankel, op.cit.

[3] Bihar Government (Draft) Eighth Five Year Plan, 1990-95, see Introduction

[4] see various essays concerning socio-economic aspects of Bihar in A.N. Sharma and Shaibal Gupta (eds.) (1987) Bihar: Stagnation or Growth

forms taken by contemporary economic backwardness; and of the distortions and barbarities wrought by the powerful intrusion of a capitalism which extracts but which fails to transform progressively'[5]. Thousands of workers, landless labourers as well as students, migrate every year to the booming industrial-cum-commercial metropolises outside the state. In fact, Bihar, 'disfigured by the deepest poverty', is in a state of endemic crisis, and hence volatile, due to the accumulated frustrations of a deteriorating economic situation. Today, Bihar witnesses more sporadic violence and militancy than any other state in India[6]. Todd Davidson has, however, cautioned the elites in India that 'to look at Bihar in the context of violence alone is to look from outside, to make unfair comparisons with the democratic logistics, histories and aspirations of the other parts of the world'[7]. According to Davidson, the Indian elites have created not only walls of indifference but also a non-cognizable semiotic complexity and danger which arises from simple methodological fallacies, i.e. they look at Bihar 'the same way as some foreigners look at India'[8]. Bihar's contemporary political leaders and unscrupulous sections among the middle class as the chief moulding influence on the public, too suffer from this incomprehension of the discursive complexity. All this has not only slowed down the historical development of a pan-Bihari sub-national identity but also weakened it. Here, it is contended that though the extractive and exploitative power of an intrusive consumer capitalism is undeniably central to Bihar's endemic problems, the techniques of social and political mobilisation, and as a result, emerging patterns of social and community (caste) relations and identity constructions were, and are equally important for literacy and educational development. Positive development of institutions in the state have not only been retarded, now they seem to be degenerating. For example, in the absence of traditional values and techniques of social organisation, both literacy and education seem to have lost their essential meaning. They have become an easy passport to jobs and services, and lost their capacity to train the individual. The state is in a state of social chaos and political anarchy. In order to understand these developments in Bihar, first let us have a brief historical outline.

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[5] Foreword by T. J. Byres in Arun Sinha (1991), Against The Few- Struggles of India's Rural Poor , vii

[6] It makes everyday news in both regional and national newspapers. Police statistics show that in 1989-90 crime went up in Bihar by an alarming 14%, resulting in at least 4,500 killings as against Assam about 650 killings in a state which is officially a disturbed state, and also in another disturbed state of Punjab with 4479 killings which lags behind Bihar. In Bihar, dacoties (robbery) went up from 2,767 in 1987 to 3,172 in 1989; kidnappings rose from 1,325 to 1,746 for the same period, and the total ransom collected was about 50 million rupees annually. These crimes are mainly politically motivated but they are at times, also guided by personal greed and deprivations. For detail, see Arvind N. Das (1992), The Republic of Bihar , xiii

[7] Todd Davidson (1996), 'Feeling India's Pulse', India Today (Weekly) May 31

[8] ibid.

2. MODERN EDUCATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Though Bihar lags behind most other states (provinces) in contemporary India, it has a remarkable record of playing a vital and leading role in early Indian history[9]. In John Houlton's words: 'In the days of the greatness of Magadha, of Mithila and the Lichchavis and Vaisali, of Gautama Buddha and Mahavira, of the Mauryan Emperors, it was indeed the central point of the culture and activities of most of the Indian peninsula'[10]. With Mughal conquest, Bihar was reduced to a peripheral province, but continued to enjoy some independence until the end of the 18th century when it finally became an appendage of Bengal under the British rule[11].

When Calcutta became the capital of British India, other medieval centres of trade, commerce, administration and vernacular cultures in northern and central India began to decline. According to the 1921 Census, Patna, which 'was the chiefest mart town of all Bengala' during the 17th century had declined considerably by the beginning of 20th century[12]. Thus traditional forms of urbanism and its concomitants, education and literacy, declined. The classical languages and vernaculars, such as Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi, Urdu and most of the traditional indigenous learning institutions that had existed through the ages, became crippled. In the pre-colonial linguistic economy, Sanskrit was the language of higher Brahminical learning, Persian was associated with Mughal high culture, while 3Rs-based elementary literacy learning was carried out either in Hindi or Urdu and/or the popular Hindustani. Prior to the coming of English, when Persian and Urdu were the official and court languages in north India, they were adapted to a more popular form of existing supra-local language called Hindustani which was a mix of Hindi and Urdu. Although highly Persianised, Urdu as an official language had to concern itself with local problems and ideas. The Shahir-i-Ashob literature, and the Bihar example of this genre by Jauhri and Rasikh, as a tradition with local images and conventions, had vast implications for the general growth of literacy in the region. The works of Jauhri and Rasikh drew heavily from both Persian and Arabic, but the content of their work deals mostly with what

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[9] For the early history of Bihar see C.P.N. Sinha (1994), 'Construction and History: Problems of Regional Identity and Historiography of Early Bihar', Presidential Address Paper, Indian History Congress, 55th Session, Aligarh; John Houlton (1949), Bihar: The Heart of India

[10] John Houlton, ibid., see Preface

[11] F.L. Lehmann (1967), 'The Eighteenth Century Transition in India: Responses of Some Bihar Intellectuals' , unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 204

[12] Government of Bihar and Orissa, Revenue Department Resolution - affixed to the Census of India: 1921, Vol. III, 2 quoted in C. J. Bishop (1972), 'Sachchidananda Sinha and the making of Modern Bihar: A study in Constitutional Agitation at the Provincial level, 1905-1919' unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 4

was going on in their society, that is, in and around Patna[13]. However, when after 1837 English started gaining increasing recognition as a language of power and administration, and as the chiefly valued medium of modern higher education, mass literacy and traditional higher learning in the vernaculars experienced severe setbacks. By the 1890s Urdu was replaced by Hindi as the court language in Bihar and as the medium of instruction for lower vernacular government schools. During this transition from Urdu to Hindi, English as a privileged language consolidated its political position at the top of the social hierarchy.

In the late 19th century, as we have seen, northern India 'still boasted of numerous, well attended indigenous schools teaching, apart from multiplication tables, "tachygraphic forms" of writing which employed abbreviated Nagari characters'[14]. There were, as reported by C.A. Bayly, also written manuals 'available in many of the merchant *mahajani* schools, which were run by retired clerks in the major commercial towns'[15]. There were mainly two levels of learning in the traditional structure, namely (a) moral and philosophical discourses coupled with professional studies such as law, medicine, rhetoric, astrology and astronomy at a very advanced level, and (b) an elementary literacy training in the 3Rs, lexicology and commercial ciphering for common purposes. To the first category of privileged institutions belonged '*Tols*' and '*Madrasas*', devoted respectively to Sanskrit and Arabic learning. Both Sanskrit and Arabic learning were held in equal respect by the community. The more informal institutions of elementary literacy were called 'Pathshalas' with medium of instruction in Hindi and 'Maktabs' with Urdu medium. The first category was practically, though not in principle, limited to a very small group, exclusively the preserve of upper castes who were mainly Brahmins, Kayasthas and Muslim aristocrats. The second was, in principle, open to all, widely accessible and available to common people. Its chief remarkable feature was instruction based on popular-language and the informality of communication between the teacher and the pupil. Among the lower artisan caste-groups who did not attend formal instruction, individuals learnt skills within their own familial occupational context. Probably, they could also read and write simple sentences. Even among the children of these lower groups, it appears that manual work in combination with formal instruction at the puberty age, was quite common[16]. However, as Nita Kumar writes:

> the dominant discourse of knowledge was that of the 'truth of the Guru' ... A school was not understood as a building, a specialised space, a set of rules regarding hours,

[13] Lehmann, op.cit., 190
[14] see Saberwal (1995), 120
[15] C.A. Bayly quoted in Saberwal, ibid.
[16] cf. Kathleen Gough (1968), 150

curricula, and assessment, though these rules existed to greater or lesser degree. A school was the place where the teacher sat, often his home, the rules he set up, and the content that he imparted.[17]

Both lower and higher levels of learning were based primarily on the written text though much of the instruction was, in principle, carried orally in an intimate way, with a series of interactive discussions between the student and the teacher. The British accounts of indigenous learning, according to Nita Kumar, were often characterised by 'a cool and simple ethnocentrism' with a mixture of 'sarcasm and amusement'[18]. She argues that 'the tailor-made individual course work, plus self established mutual relations between teacher and student, as well as the ideas of service that went with education, ensured that the level of responsibility in education was high', and she quotes one Deputy Inspector of Schools from Allahabad to have noted that 'the discipline, so far as reverence and obedience is concerned, is far superior to that in our government schools, though lax in other respects'[19].

From the point of view of pedagogic theory such oral practices conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust, familiar speech and culturally shared values, were not only useful in teaching a limited curriculum, but also, it was the most effective and successful mode of instruction. This method used to enable students/participants to replicate, question and expand on the given 'text', partly by bringing other related 'texts' and examples into their discussion and partly through bringing their own reflections on the 'text'. The teacher and the students shared a cultural context. It based itself on a genuine cultural conversation among autonomous learners, yet it was the teacher who carried the responsibility of scholarship. The teacher did not assume from the outset, a mutual understanding though both the teacher and the pupil assumed a common purpose in knowledge. There was no pretence that the relationship between the teacher and student was even, balanced or unproblematic. In fact, the teacher in most cases, was authoritative, and in many cases reportedly a terror. However, the successful and reputed teacher was a person who, in principle, recognised individuality, opinions and experience of his students. Learning took place in an intimate way, based upon successful communication and the positions of the two were reconciled by faith and reverence. This brings us back to our argument developed in previous chapters that the most significant moments in lower class education or popular

[17] Nita Kumar in a workshop on 'Modernisation of Hinduism', at SOAS, London University, 26-27 November, 1993. Her paper (unpublished) was titled, 'Sanskrit pandits and the modernization of Sanskrit education in the 19th-20th centuries'.
[18] ibid.
[19] ibid.; also G.W. Leitner (1882), History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab since Annexation and in 1882

mass education can come precisely when people are willing to declare, in a situation of trust and common need, that even the most elementary skills can be learnt only in an environment of communicative familiarity, mutual trust, cooperation and interaction. These social pre-requisites and methods in pedagogy are relevant to a community of learners who have certain economic and functional needs, and are generally associated with certain habits of mind, oral culture and social experiences. The problem with the newly introduced education system, within an institutional, bureaucratic and professional setting, was that it aggravated people's distrust and disaffection by imposition of an alien and technical language (theory) of schooling and a large-scale formal organisation. The richness and economy of traditional learning practices derived strength in large measure from their capacity to integrate the major genres of both the 'written' and the 'oral' communication, that is, both the 'secular' (non-spiritual, non-religious) and the 'non-secular', the conceptual and the non-conceptual components of cognition. Oral commentary methods were as rigorous and important as the text itself. Obviously, these methods were not available to the new teachers of government schools, who had poor training and poor salary, while old Maulvis and Pandits were not relied upon.[20]

British intervention in Bihar with its utilitarian logic in education meant that comparatively fewer grants-in-aids were made available to Vernacular and Aided schools under the administration, while traditional learning centres under the Guru or a Maulavi were not only un-recognised but also ridiculed and discouraged. This politics and poetics (language) of pedagogy caused immense harm to the existing semi-formal form of indigenous learning[21]. Neither English education nor vernacular education under the government could have much success in Bihar. In Bihar, traditional schools were poorly substituted by English medium or vernacular schools which received inadequate funds from the administration. A few English-medium schools, called *Zila* Schools were opened in some of the district towns, but good schools were limited to presidency towns like Calcutta. The unhelpful attitude on the part of higher authorities brought forth a resentful reaction from the people. The people adopted not only a non-cooperative attitude but also became suspicious towards authorities and government schools where no provision was made for instruction either in the popular language or in the classical languages like Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. The result was that government schools proved failures in

[20] Leitner, op.cit., ii (Introduction)
[21] A detail account of these institutions is given in Leitner, op.cit.

most cases[22]. There was a gradual decline in the government grant towards elementary education - from 44% in 1881-82 to 29.2% of the total annual educational budget in 1936-37[23]. Bihar entered a perpetual state of educational backwardness with indigenous institutions and schools struggling to survive amidst the withdrawal of support from rich peasants, landlords and an indifferent colonial administration. Despite poor and inadequate facilities, traditional schools, however, continued to survive and serve for some more time, as long as government schools kept failing. By the mid and late 19th century, it became proverbial for Bihar to be described as a region 'in a state of darkness', compared to neighbouring Bengal where government funded Vernacular and English-medium schools and colleges increasingly came into existence.

English and modern education found little response in Bihar also for want of employment opportunities and degrading conditions associated with low-paid jobs. The form of education which was envisaged by the colonial masters was in general not intended to benefit the local population. It was proposed that for the preservation of colonial domination, all higher offices (both civil and military) be filled by Europeans, and other departments where there was no danger to their power, could be left in the hands of the natives. Some high positions in government service, for example, in the Indian Educational Service, were allowed to be filled by Indians to raise a native aristocracy indebted to them, which in the case of Bihar and all northern states, were filled by privileged and educated Bengalis coming from Calcutta.

For these reasons of poor quality education, unemployment, small salary and smattering of English culture, etc., people in Bihar became reluctant to pursue an alien education, particularly English and higher education. Higher education was considered to have a low return for the investments it required. It was considered to have a corrupting influence. As a result, Bihar produced a negligible number of English educated and skilled persons to qualify for government jobs. Also, the upper-caste educated Biharis were reluctant to go to far off places for education or employment[24]. Biharis remained defiant and unwilling to take up a foreign language and education without actually bothering to develop their own. In an agrarian economy in those days, education for low employment was considered insignificant. However, with the passage of time, English education with its corrupting influence of government jobs on the offer, was seen to provide social

[22] Jata Shankar Jha (1976), 'Education in Bihar', (Chapter XX) in K.K. Datta (ed.), The Comprehensive History of Bihar, Vol. 3, Part 2, 365

[23] S.Y. Shah (1989), Adult Education in Bihar, 6

[24] Census of India: 1901, Vol. VI, 130-133 in C. J. Bishop, op.cit., 10

mobility and status. Later, more self-conscious and traditionally literate communities like the Kayasthas and the Muslims were quick to adopt modern education for improving their own social status. Jata Shankar Jha writes: 'They had to face competition with the Bengalis. These were the people who suffered most due to change of the official language from Persian to English. Hence they set up an agitation for separation of Bihar from Bengal and gave the slogan "Bihar for Biharis"' [25]. This sudden and short-lived manifestation and crystallization of a Bihari regional identity in the beginning of this century was a result of resource competition between the Bengalis and the indigenous elite-caste Biharis. Their activities remained confined largely to narrow, caste-based interests of securing jobs and positions for their community-men. Within a decade, there were more than a dozen caste journals and small newspapers being published in Bihar[26].

Caste ideology and its language in Bihar has acted in more subtle ways to insulate various groups from each other, particularly the higher, rich castes from the more lower and poor castes. This has checked the diffusion of public literacy from one strata to the another, and insulated each community-group from the effects of reform movements mounted by the English-educated middle class intellectuals of Calcutta'[27]. This has also checked the emergence of a secular public sphere representing collective Bihari interests. The size of the English or the vernacular-educated class in Bihar was so small and confined to so few castes that the role of print-literacy through newspapers and journals was very limited. In the colonial period, the major preoccupation of educated upper caste Biharis, no less than that of the lower castes, was not to foster a collective sub-national identity relevant to Bihari aspirations but to raise the relative status of their caste-community. In Bihar, reformist organisations like Arya Samaj also worked on caste lines, that is, they helped lower-caste members (e.g., *kurmis* and *dhanuks*) 'sanskritize' their social and ritual practices and establish educational institutions on caste names[28]. All these preceding organizations and movements before the nationalist movement only consolidated the identity of the cognate groups and their educational needs, in terms of a divided Bihari sub-national community.

Journalism, literature and printing press in general in Bihar found a weak support from the administration and from the thin and poorly developed commerce and enterprising

[25] Jata Shankar Jha (1969), 'Early Revolutionary Nationalism in Bihar', Journal of the Bihar Research Society, Vol. LV, Parts I-IV, 160
[26] N. Kumar (1971), Journalism in Bihar, Bihar District Gazetteers, vi-viii
[27] Frankel, op.cit.
[28] ibid.

community. As a result, the career of most enterprises was erratic and short-lived because of lack of financial resources and trained staff. Many had to close after one or two years. Unlike Calcutta, Patna had no European mercantile community to support an Anglo-Indian Press and a periodical could hardly count on little income from advertisements and subscriptions[29]. Hindi literature in the *Khariboli* form had begun to develop only towards the end of 19th century, while Urdu publications, despite respectable achievements earlier, slowly ceased[30]. Multilingual literates, i.e. people equally conversant in Hindi, Urdu, English, and various other local dialects were few in Bihar, and so were bilinguals, literate in Hindi and Urdu but very little proficient in English. They were few and far between, and transport and communication were not very good. Thus an elitist pursuit of literary traditions coexisted with the indifference of the larger public to reading and writing. Reading and writing habits in the vernacular that might have fostered a further growth of literacy through journalism and popular literature, were therefore underdeveloped in Bihar.

Both Urdu and the *Khariboli* form of Hindi as standard languages were used mainly by a thin upper layer of the literate public. The masses on the other hand used other popular speech varieties such as the *Maithili, Magahi, Angika, Bhojpuri, Santhali* or other tribal languages. They also used Hindustani as a supra-local language for more formal purposes such as trade, business and official transactions. Bihari local varieties such as *Maithili* and *Bhojpuri* also have had literary traditions of their own but these could not be used as mediums of popular and literary communication. All the three main dominant forms of Hindi, namely, *Khariboli*, *Awadhi* and *Braj* were alien to the Bihari soil when Hindi was undergoing a standardisation process at the beginning of this century. Though now well accepted by its educated elites, the standard *Khariboli* form of Hindi was initially quite often not intelligible to the common masses of Bihar. Thus lack of a popular vocabulary and idiom remained as big barrier to linguistic intelligibility and general spread of literacy from the upper to the lower layers of the reading public. This mutual alienation of two groups also impaired literacy expansion by way of linguistic social interaction, 'oral' practice and cultural enjoyment i.e. performing genres such as drama and *nautanki*.

Even though colonial contact was destructive for indigenous mass institutions and values, all was not lost. Education was formally transferred to Indian hands as early as 1921 but it was only after the provincial autonomy given to states in 1937 that modern education in Bihar grew slightly faster. Educational expenditure invested yearly per student

[29] see N. Kumar, op.cit., i, v, vii and viii; and C. J. Bishop, op.cit., 104-150
[30] see C.R. King (1994), One Language, Two Scripts - The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century India

enrolled at the primary stage almost trebled from Rupees 4.30 in 1916-17 to Rupees 12.60 in 1948-49 with a simultaneous sharp increase in total enrollment. The actual enrollment during 1922-27 was 9,41,675 students which increased to 12,42,407 students in 1952-53. According to Census Reports, literacy rates in Bihar increased significantly from 5.2% in 1931 to 9.2% in 1941 and then to 18.4% in 1961. During 1948-49, in Bihar for an estimated 19.6 million population the total number of primary schools were 21,604 with 1.23 million students enrolled and were taught by 36,587 teachers. By 1962 the number of primary schools had risen to 54,760 with a total of 4.78 million students enrolled. By 1962 the average annual cost of primary education had gone up to Rupees 17 per student and the average teacher-pupil ratio is reported as 1:45 for the same year[31]. In the post-independence period, there has been massive, though inadequate and impoverished, quantitative expansion of education in Bihar following government guidelines, which say that schools can not be provided in villages with less than 300 inhabitants. There are reportedly nearly 8 thousand such settlements in the state. In all, about 20% of the entire population in the state is still not served by a primary school.

Although educational facilities have been expanding in the state, there has been a parallel fall in standards, to the point that parents of promising students do not want to send them to regular government schools. The state itself has taken no major deliberate step in initiating any policy change in the educational sphere, nor has it made educational objectives and roles an issue of public or institutional debate. There has been no debate at the state level regarding policy on curriculum and language of instruction, except for the guidelines and directives issued by the central government. Often the Bihar government has failed to provide its own share of the educational budget. For example, towards the ongoing projects like TLC and Bihar Education Project (BEP) initiated in 1991 by the Centre for making a success of mass education in the state, the state government has failed to provide its own small share, one-third of the total plan. The only minor changes after Independence were in 1959 and 1971 which were a re-enactment over the Primary Education Act of 1919 and state undertaking or nationalization of a few of the existing non-government primary schools run by private individuals such as Gurus and Maulvis. In the wake of the nationalization process, English as a compulsory pass subject at the matriculation level was also abolished. When a debate about the useful and practical

[31] All figures quoted here are from the combined volume books Compulsory Education in India (eds.) K.G. Saiyidain, J.P. Naik and S. Abid Husain, and Progress of Compulsory Education in India (1951-1966) by Pandit G.K. Ojha (1966), see 164, 233-236. It is not clear from the data given whether the costs are calculated in constant or current terms of the rupee value.

elements of Gandhian crafts-based education was initiated, some Basic schools were opened on an experimental basis, but they failed due to an inconsistent and unintegrated education policy of the government. Although the Bihar Official Languages Acts of 1950 and 1960 gradually made Hindi the official language to be adopted by all government departments, offices and courts in the state, since English still continues to be actually dominant, importance of the vernacular and of vernacular education remains undermined. Nor is the Hindi language use and content in school textbooks consistent with the life, language and aspirations of the various communities in Bihar. This has been pointed out by both PRASHIKA (Eklavya) and Shalini Advani with their intensive study of language, content and curriculum in north Indian schools. According to Advani, school textbooks do not impart a 'lived sense of cultural variation and difference, because of a fundamental and misrecognised discomfort with the very notion of a federated and diverse nation'[32].

What is often called the failure of the state education system in Bihar is the corrupting influence and manipulation of educational institutions in the state by profiteers, politicians and education department and university officials. Its failure cannot be ascribed to any major lack of educational infrastructure and training in the state. 'Known to educationists for having the highest dropout rate (also highest migration of students to major cities outside the state), Bihar is less known as the employer of over 100,000 teachers in the formal schools system and 200,000 in the non-formal stream - one of the better teacher-student ratios' in the country[33]. The examination system is in shambles; caste and group dominate the educational scene; and the out-migration of Bihari students, like those of labourers, to places of learning in other parts of India' is on the rise[34]. Here, what is involved is a social conflict not only over the question of academic versus vocational education, but more than that, a conflict and negotiation on the part of both students and parents, who assess what kinds of values, statuses and identities are attached to various existing educational institutions and degrees.

3. A CONTEMPORARY PROFILE OF THE STATE

As we have seen, Bihar's social backwardness is largely economic and political in its origin. The economic indicators of development have remained the lowest for almost over a century. In the present decade too, its economic condition is falling backwards.

[32] Shalini Advani (1996), 'Educating the National Imagination', EPW, Vol. XXXI, No. 31
[33] Education for All - The Indian Scene - Widening Horizons, (1993), DAE, see Chapter on 'Bihar Education Project', 19-22 (words within bracket added)
[34] Arvind N. Das, op.cit, 44-45

According to estimates contained in *Economic Survey of India* 1991-92, in 1989-90 per capita net State Domestic Product (SDP) at current prices was the lowest in the country, a meagre Rs. 2,122 per annum in comparison to rich states like Punjab (Rs. 7081), and others like Haryana, Delhi, Karnataka and Maharashtra which have incomes similar to that of Punjab. The national average was double that of Bihar at Rs. 4,252. In fact, in 1950-51, per capita net SDP in Bihar was Rs. 181 against the national average of Rs. 298, that is about 40% less. In 1960-61, in relative terms, it had improved to 30% less than the national average, but slipped down again in 1970-71 to 35% below. Even in 1980-81, Bihar was at the bottom. The per capita plan outlays for Bihar have been among the lowest from the First to the Fifth Five Year Plans; in the Sixth Plan they were actually the lowest - Rs. 456 compared to Rs. 1,179 for Punjab, Rs. 600 for West Bengal and Rs. 536 for Orissa. The situation has not improved during subsequent Plan periods and Bihar's economy still remains dominated by an agriculture sector which uses largely a primitive technology and traditional forms of transport and communication.

The population of Bihar according to the 1991 Census was actually 86.37 millions which constitutes about 10.2% of the national population and this makes it the second-most populous state after Uttar Pradesh. Only 32.64% of the total population in the state is employed in the organised sector (1991 Census). Only 12.5% of the total population lives in urban areas and about 40% live below the poverty line. According to the 1991 Census, the state had the lowest literacy rate among all the states of India - 38.48% as against the national average of 52%. Kerala was top with 89.81% literacy. Child mortality is very high (about 69%, Kerala 17%). More than 40% of the people live below the poverty line, and about one fourth of the entire population belongs to the weaker sections of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs). Total female literacy is 22.89% as against male literacy of 52.49%. In the rural areas the literacy is 33.83% with only 17.95% of women being literate. In rural literacy in general (and women in particular) Bihar again is at the bottom next only to Rajasthan where female literacy is only 11.59% (Kerala 85.12%). Thus literacy in rural areas and for the weaker sections including the women is alarmingly low[35].

These official literacy figures do not tell much about the quality of literacy, but even among those included in this list, half can hardly read or write anything except their own names. At best, the literacy quality of the other half of these Census reported 'literates' is confined to a few rudiments qualifying them to write personal or business

[35] All these figures are based on 1991 Census. Source: India 1995 - A Reference Annual, GOI

letters with some practical knowledge of day to day 3Rs. Formal and technical educational figures in Bihar are slightly better, though they too are becoming stagnant and have deteriorated sharply in quality. Professionally relevant and meaningful education is limited to a very privileged minority who can send their children to private educational institutions outside the state. Consciousness of education for social mobility among the middle and upper sections is very high, as is evident from the fact that over a million students enter into state higher education and some thousands join universities and technical institutions of big metropolitan cities outside the state. The point being emphasized here as a conclusion of all the foregoing discussion is that Bihar's backwardness in the modern period has been primarily economic and political, and only secondarily social, e.g., consequences arising from a colonial and Zamindari domination over a caste divided society and subsequent undermining of Bihari collective interests both by the overriding power of its segmented identities and the self-seeking nationalists and metropolitan bourgeoise. At the bottom of this fragmented spectrum there is the large tribal population, which is not only out of the mainstream but also the most deprived and super-exploited community. Some discussion of the tribal situation is necessary here before we come to our actual case study of a tribal village in Dumka district.

4. THE TRIBAL SCENE

Three districts in Bihar, namely the old Santhal Pargana (now divided into three districts, including Dumka), Ranchi and Singhbhum are among the 15 districts in central India which have more than 30% tribal population. Among the hills of the Chotanagpur region of South Bihar, these tribals, e.g., Santhals, Ho, Paharias, Mundas and Oraons have lived in isolation, separated from the mainstream population for ages. Only lately, during the last two centuries tribals have experienced some exogenous influences. The early history of Santhal migration remains conjectural. There exists no record of early tribal wandering. Neither any scholarly attention seems to have attracted scholars and officials to study Santhali myth-making processes. According to S.P. Sinha, early government officials seem to have considered tribal existence as insignificant. For example, Herbert Risely in 1903 considered that 'a people whose only means of recording facts consists of tying knots in strings and who have no bards to hand down a nation epic by oral tradition, can hardly be expected to preserve the memory of the past long enough or accurately enough'[36].

[36] S.P. Sinha (1991), 'The Santals and Paharias: Past & Present', Bulletin of the Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute, Vol. XXXI, No. 1&2, 1-8

Theirs 'is a simple society in as much as it is oral, preliterate and traditional. Not that other simple communities are very much different from them, but the tribals differ from them so far as mental level, ecology and economic development are concerned'.[37]

The Santhals of Dumka district (earlier called Santhal Pargana) were initially hunters and food gatherers who wandered among the hills of Chotanagpur region. They became settled farmers/peasants with small private ownership of land ensured by government legislation only during the last century. As noted by P.O. Bodding, 'the Santals appear to have settled in the districts around Dumka between 1790 and 1810'[38]. According to F.R. Frankel, the Santhals 'were among the worst affected after the British pacified the area, and by 1823 succeeded in placing what was known as the Damin-i-koh under the charge of a European superintendent of revenue administration'[39]. The later influx of settlers from outside such as the Bengalis, the Marwaris and the Bhojpuri foreigners, whom they call *'Diku'*, 'cunning usurious foreigners' - was 'marked by exploitation of the Santhals through appropriation of land they had cleared (often by foreclosing on mortgages); exorbitant interest rates on loans; seizure of cattle for arrears; and the condemnation of many to bonded labour'[40]. Initially these non-tribal foreigners who belong to the mainstream dominant community, came in large numbers for purposes of business and trade. The tribals lost their land to these immigrant '*Dikus*' and were reduced to daily wage earners or bonded labours.

Before British came, Santhals had their own traditional administrative and revenue system. Tribal autonomy in matters of self-regulation and local administration ended with the coming of modern education and administration dominated by non-tribal upper-caste Hindus. Tribal people have reacted to this domination and exploitation in a number of uprisings, among which the Santhal uprisings of 1795-1860 were the most significant. Subsequent uprisings also took place between 1860-1920 and 1920-1947 which were marked by growing anger and protest against the new system of administration, new classes, new landlords, traders and missionaries[41]. The aftermath of these uprisings, particularly the 1855 uprising, saw Santhals being treated as "barbarous". Tribals came under ever-increasing evangelisation pressure of missionaries who on a small scale, in

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[37] S.P. Sinha (1990), 'Introduction of Education in British India - A Study of Tribal Bihar in Retrospect & Prospect', Bulletin of the Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute, Vol. XXIX, No. 1&2, 59-98

[38] S.P. Sinha (1991), op.cit.

[39] Frankel, op.cit., 57; Daman-i-koh is a Persian word meaning by the 'skirts of the hills', and this vast tract was reserved as a special administrative and revenue category for the Santhals and Paharias.

[40] ibid.

[41] K. S. Singh (1978), 'Colonial Transformation of Tribal Society in Middle India', EPW, July 29

selected areas like Ranchi and Hazaribagh districts, were engaged in a 'comprehensive scheme of religious, secular, and industrial education for the "barbarous Santhals"'[42]. However, all development and educational efforts for the improvement of tribals were based on adhocism and experiments mainly geared to preaching rather than educating, and this formed the main guiding attitude of missionaries and government officials working in tribal districts. These interventionist efforts had created deep prejudices in the minds of tribals against the authorities and missionaries which ultimately affected the functioning of a few non-Christian and government schools. In post-Independence India, tribal disaffection has taken shape as a movement demanding a separate state for tribals called Jharkhand. In these protests and the demand for a separate Jharkhand state, a continuing desire to maintain a tribal identity with emphasis on tradition, restoration of autonomy is evident[43].

The tribals of the Chotanagpur region in general, and of Dumka in particular since it has no industry or mines, are at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy existing in Bihar. Unlike the landless peasant and workers belonging to mainstream Hindu and Muslim communities, tribals are a super-exploited group. Tribal community existence is characterised as non-mainstream. Tribal customs, traditions, values and languages are considered worthless by the dominant community. The political identity of tribals as a constitutional category, called 'Scheduled Tribes' (STs) is a legal creation of the Indian Constitution. This identity though now slowly being socially recognised, is not respected for its legal rights and special privileges. Tribals are considered as 'other' people who have to adopt the dominant ways and languages of the mainstream people. As a consequence, even developmental processes based on dominant values and implemented by dominant non-tribals, seem to bypass them.

Tribals are supposed to be assimilated within the mainstream culture by a forced division of labour and with some material rewards such as provision of schools, of drinking water and of primary health centres in their area. Dumka district officials' attitude of administrative intervention has been at best like that of benevolent missionaries who partially implement some government projects while rejecting others[44]. They tried to

[42] S.P. Sinha, (1990), op.cit., 70-71

[43] Ajit K. Pandey (1991), 'Traditionalism and Modernity among Mundas and Oraons', Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. 44, No. 3, 248

[44] Non-fulfillment of large number of vacancies for the job of peons in the schools and government offices of the districts reserved for SCs and STs by the administration were reported by many volunteers and learners. Also bank loans for self-employment were reported to be non-operational. A few programmes like provision of drinking water, tree plantation, immunisation and TLC were the only initiatives taken by district Officials in last two decades. People complained that nothing was done to improve the primitive irrigation system.

introduce only those government projects which cost little and offered maximum publicity, for example, minor projects like supply of drinking water-pumps, primary schools and primary health care centres. These partially enforced schemes, and indifference on the part of officials, has condemned tribals to a backward and minority status. Some development statistics for tribal and non-tribal regions are worth comparing. Although revenue contribution from the Chotanagpur region is as high as 70%, state investment in this area is only 20% of the investment plan, where as the rest of Bihar contributes only 30% and receives 80%. The Chotanagpur region has only 5% of the irrigated land in comparison to the rest of Bihar which has 80%. Rural electrification in the Chotanagpur region is only 5% where as it is 40% for the rest of Bihar. 'The most striking feature of the development process' in the tribal districts 'is that only 30% of the meagre allotted funds reach the people, and 50% remain unutilised'[45].

The diversity of Bihar's backwardness militates against the development of community aspirations, and as a result prevents the articulation of a collective interest common to all communities. As we observed, an elite and dominant caste dominated democracy with segmented identities has structured the patterns of community mobilisation in Bihar. Community leaders in Bihar organise their socio-economic groups more as power resources in inter-caste and intra-elite struggles which serves less their group's general aspirations, more the elites' advantage. In this group rivalry and intra-elite competition, the tribals are completely excluded by the dominant groups. Even the present Jharkhand movement which presumably rests on tribal aspirations is now alleged to be grabbed by the non-tribal business community and political leaders[46]. Confronted with a rapid development and elite-modernisation process, the tribal groups 'often experience loss of self-esteem, and devaluation of social identity. The negative attitude of the dominant society towards their culture aggravates this feeling. Besides being reduced to what is called *nijabhume parabasi* (outsider in own land) due to exploitation and extreme poverty', the tribal people have 'become incapable of any action against the disruption' of (their) culture and suppression of (their) languages'[47]. Thus tribal integration with the mainstream national life has become a myth.

Nehru's policy on national and tribal development emphasized 'integration' rather than 'assimilation', but in face of no serious challenge from the tribal community, this

[45] Sajal Basu (1994), Jharkhand Movement -Ethnicity and Culture of Silence , 8. All figures quoted above are from Sajal Basu, ibid.
[46] see Anish Gupta (1992), Making sense of Jharkhand' in Sunday (Weekly), 18-24 October, 32-37
[47] Sajal Basu, op.cit., 32 (Words within bracket added)

policy has been abandoned by the later generation of political and bureaucratic elites. As a result, the district administration at the grassroots level has become negligent about the survival and emotive needs of tribals, which if attended to, could foster genuine association and a democratic integration with the Indian nation-state. Aijazuddin Ahmad and Sheel Nuna argue that although tribals are in a substantive majority in the Jharkhand region, their ethnic identity in fact lies divided within the broad framework of political state organisation of India along linguistic lines[48]. In fact, each tribal group is divided, with identities thrust on them by their linguistic association with local dominant groups. Tribals living in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh get their schooling mainly in Hindi, in West Bengal they have it in Bengali, and in Orissa in Oriya. All these three school-languages use norms which are used by respective elite literati sections as the standard form of these languages. So tribals have to cross two hurdles before acquiring mastery of these standard languages. One is their own language, and the other is the local-popular language. Even in the old Santhal Pargana district, tribals who constitute one large linguistic community have to adopt different dominant languages like Hindi, Bengali and Oriya of their respective states. All these divided political and administrative affiliations affect negatively the tribal community's cohesion. This obviously also undermines their communication system and values through which they have been carrying their skill learning and productive life.

Even in Dumka, popular or standard Hindi is main form tribals have to interact with at a supra-local level although their own dialect, known as *Santhali*, is quite distinct. Only about one-third of adult male members and a one-fifth of adult female members of the tribal community were reported to be able to speak and understand popular Hindi on a communicable basis[49]. The language dynamics of the tribal community is based on the needs of tribals of the Santhal Pargana region to communicate within their own group, often to the exclusion of non-tribal 'Dikus'. Thus earlier 'Santhali' has been used by older members as a language of resistance, though the younger members are now partly under the educational influence of popular Hindi[50].

It is generally the tribals who have to adopt the ways and languages of non-tribals while interacting with them and not vice-versa. State policy on tribal education continues

[48] see Aijazuddin Ahmad and Sheel C. Nuna (1993), 'Tribal Education' (Chapter 13) in Sheel C. Nuna (ed.) Regional Disparities in Educational Development , 207-227

[49] Of all the seven villages in Dumka visited during November-December 1994, the village-Chiefs, MTs, VTs and a few district officials reported almost the same percentage of tribal people able to communicate in popular Hindi (but not standard Hindi). Some more can understand popular Hindi but the majority (about a half) of the tribals cannot make any sense of a language other than 'Santhali' dialect.

[50] In discussion with the village-Chief of Nawadih (Jama Block) on the 7th of December 1994.

this pattern. Thus 'Sanskrit, claimed as mother-tongue by only a few hundred people', is included in the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution, whereas 'none of the tribal mother tongue languages such as Santhali (36 lakhs), Bhilli (12.5 lakhs), Lammi (12 lakhs), etc. find mention in the ES, while Kashmiri (24 lakhs) and Sindhi (12 lakhs) are constitutionally recognised'[51]. 'Santhali' language in *ol* script, and in some cases in other dominant language scripts, has developed over the time with encouragement from the government, both in Bihar and Bengal. It has now a Santhali grammar and some other literature published by the Santali Literary Society in Calcutta[52]. However, their activities have been limited to an elite intervention and on a minor scale. These elites consisting mainly of educated tribals in government services have started re-writing Santhal mythology and folk stories in the same way which is typical of most early, romantic writers of a paternalistic persuasion[53]. Ordinary Santhals have used 'Santhali' mainly for oral communication rather than for writing. In this respect, they are characteristically South Asian, similar to most oral traditions which used 'learning and sharing' rather than maintaining of written records for cultural transmission.

Although there are about 5 million Santhals in the entire region, their rate of literacy is as low as 8%. In Dumka especially, as we observed, only 30-40% of the total enrolled attend schools regularly. The medium of instruction in schools is either Hindi or Bengali, and where the interaction between the teacher and the pupil, and between the pupil and the textbooks is very unsatisfactory. S.P. Sinha writes that 'tribal education is a myth' because it is the general education in the standard dominant language like Hindi, and not in the tribal language which is imparted to the tribal children[54]. A survey of linguistic competence of teachers in the Rajmahal area (near Dumka) reveals that out of the total 369 teachers, 271 teachers were non-tribals who had no knowledge of Santhali language, nor were they able to communicate in this language. 52% of the teachers are reported to attend school only for about six months in a year, and 39% teachers attend only for 4-5 months[55]. These teachers, mostly reported incompetent, absent themselves to do their private work and to avoid the monotony of a dull life typical of a tribal area. The problem of non-communication in schools and in public life for the majority tribals has led to the

[51] Sadhna Saxena (1997), 'Language and the Nationality Question', EPW, Vol. XXXII, No. 6, 268-272. Here the figures are given in lakhs; 10 lakhs is equal to one million.
[52] Sajal Basu, op.cit., 23
[53] Peter B. Andersen's unpublished Seminar Paper titled, 'The transition from oral tradition to written literature - the Santals become literate', Seminar on 26/01/1998 at SOAS, London University, London
[54] S.P. Sinha (1990), 97
[55] Sajal Basu, op.cit., 8

articulation of 'Santhali' linguistic identity, but at the same time, the standardisation of Santhali is being marred by diversified use of scripts. Apart from the *ol* script, Oriya, Nagari and Bengali scripts are also being used. The Christian missionaries too have pushed their own Roman script[56]. All this has plagued the development of Santhali language, and as such, the problem of communication and non-comprehension in the written medium continues to baffle the tribal school children.

According to Peter B. Andersen, the Santhals have a long oral tradition by which they transmitted their culture 'in various ways'. However, the main institutionalised mode is the system of *gurus* or individuals called *jogmajhi* or simply *majhi*, who specialize in tribal rituals and myths, which they recite during relevant occasions. Lately, some of these rituals and myths have been documented by folklorists, officials and missionaries. Lately, some semi-urban centres inhabited by tribals have also started having access to a number of Santhal writings in forms of plays, short stories and other journalistic writings. These writings are far more communicative and 'politically relevant to the situation of the gurus and their rural audience. Their content helps the audience to define their ethnic identity as Santhals (with whom they are allowed to intermarry), and which castes are to be considered as friendly, and which as exploiters (mostly Brahmins)[57]. In some parts of Bengal, probably where Peter Andersen has done his field-study, Santhals are reported to have developed literature and information 'in all genres from journalism and agricultural instruction to poems and novels'[58]. However, this was not evident in the places we visited in Dumka district. One or two writings on Santhal life and culture that were available in Dumka were mostly written by non-tribals, and in Hindi. For example, Satyendra Kumar Singh has written a small booklet which trivializes tribal traditions and social structures in an inattentive way; e.g., he explains tribal rituals through categories akin to Hindu rituals[59].

Although Santhals in other parts are creating an impressive amount of literature 'with the purpose of curbing some of the non-Santhal influences on Santhal culture', these reading materials are not available to all, particularly at the rural level[60]. Also since most of these literatures are developed by tribal elites, they are 'mostly arranged for didactic purposes to modernise the Santhals'. One example is the modern drama about tribal witchcraft. Here the phenomena of witches which is familiar to all Santhals, is not depicted

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[56] Andersen, op.cit.
[57] ibid.
[58] ibid.
[59] see S.K. Singh (1990), *Santal Jeewan Aur Sanskriti*
[60] Andersen, op. cit.

as a wicked woman. Instead, the whole notion of witchcraft and worship is 'ridiculed as superstition'[61]. The danger here, in documenting and representing such tribal practices, and ridiculing the values inherent in them, is that it may restrict interpretation of a community phenomena to one type of reading, and ultimately aggravate the prejudices of tribals. Many witchcraft stories are superstitious and implicitly moral. But the way they were rendered moral, the way they were retold each time by a *majhi*, and the way they were received by their tribal audiences, varied enormously according the situation and the context of their presentation. They are not fixed, nor are they internalised by the individual on the spot. Everything in the end depended on the individual, his/her response, attitude and belief. But by ridiculing these practices from an outsider's perspectives, and making them fixed in a written text, these tribal elites are risking a folk tradition which may be reflective or associated with a particular identity and ways of seeing. This danger arises from the fact that 'even when they deliberately work to turn Santali into a full-fledged "modern" language, they translate concepts and moral notions from the social reality of the majority language speakers'[62]. The tribal writers who are mainly bureaucrats staying and working in the big cities, too are impelled by a desire to modernise Santhal identity which arises essentially from their own experiences at work and in schools and colleges. Peter Andersen points out that 'in doing so they move away from those Santals who follow a traditional living in the rural villages, and one may ask whether the authors in becoming literati leave the "people" behind them in the modernization process'[63]. The great divide or gap between the 'literate' and 'illiterate' tribals is already on the scene, and is likely to grow wider.

No tribal language is included in mother-tongue education, nor are their historical experiences, traditions and current life-conditions part of the existing school curriculum. In fact, one or two rare stories containing tribal characters in language textbooks of state schools present an inferior and subordinate image of tribals or their heroes[64]. As a consequence, state education, instead of empowering tribals through their own cultural base, encourages them to unlearn their own language which ultimately shatters their communicative capacity and lowers their self-esteem. In doing so, state school education has re-distanced the tribal children from their own cultural base and identity. However, apart from the subtle and more direct influences exerted by the state through its institutions and its officials, there has not been much influence of the missionary schools in the Santhal

[61] ibid.
[62] ibid.
[63] ibid.
[64] cf. PRASHIKA (1994), Sadhna Saxena, op.cit.

Pargana. In their resistance to foreigners and their languages, Santhals have largely been able to maintain their own dialect and other religious beliefs and practices. They have also been able to escape large-scale conversions to Christianity. However, slow developmental processes in the region, particularly with increased and forced division of labour, spread of commerce, growth of political movements and democracy, and constitutional recognition of their political identity as Scheduled Tribes, have reduced the isolation of tribal communities in the last 50-60 years. Initially various Santhal uprisings, and later the revivalist Tana Bhagat movement produced exceptionally strong leaders, who, with their 'Adivasi Sabha' (founded in 1938) brand of nationalist discourse focused on a language of adopting an integrative rather than assimilative attitude to tribal integration, autonomy and identity vis-à-vis the Indian state[65].

On the other hand, democratic processes and constitutional making of their political identity have again reinforced their community dynamics. Their legal-political identity as Scheduled tribes is now generally recognised, though yet to mature into a commonly perceived identity by the tribals living in Dumka. Tribal political identity has also given rise to a trend which seeks to transfer its grievances from a community language to a political language, highlighting the idea of exploitation associated with social indignity, and to confer on themselves a self-description as a marginalised ethnic community. This common identity of Scheduled tribes living in a particular area and in a particular social condition, is both a natural community identity and a constructed modern identity, which is now asserting itself against the dominant groups. It is in this historical and social context that we can now understand tribal participation and motivation in TLC in Dumka.

[65] Joseph Bara (1997), 'Western Education and Rise of New Identity - Mundas and Oraons of Chotanagpur, 1839-1939', EPW, Vol. XXXII, No. 15, 785-790

Part Two

TLC in Bihar - A Case Study

1. TLC COVERAGE IN BIHAR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DUMKA

Now we will study the nature of implementation of a state-sponsored literacy programme, namely the 'Total Literacy Campaign' (TLC - 1988). It is based on a micro-level case-study of a tribal village in Dumka district of Bihar. In a backward state like Bihar where an otherwise difficult situation[1] prevails for any educational initiative, recently two ambitious programmes were launched. In the sphere of formal education, there is now the 'Bihar Education Project' (BEP) launched in 1991 with financial assistance from UNICEF, the central and state governments. BEP aims at 'Education for All' (EFA) at the elementary level. It is the first major attempt in India to include the broad range of national strategies in one large-scale operational programme. It is regarded as the UNICEF's flagship EFA project[2]. Another ambitious programme in the non-formal sector is the TLC, launched to eradicate 'illiteracy' and improve 'functional efficiency'.

TLC in Bihar was launched first in Madhepura district in October 1991 and has now been extended to 16 districts (as in August 1994). During the first four decades after Independence (1947-1986), four major state-sponsored literacy programmes were launched in Bihar but with limited success for short periods[3]. In 1988, the Government launched TLC in an attempt to improve upon earlier programmes. At the district level, TLC is being implemented mainly by district administrations, though generally through separate bodies registered as District Literacy Societies, commonly called by their Hindi name Zila Saksharata Samiti (ZSS)[4]. The members of the ZSS are generally the members of the bureaucracy or other government employees such as the school teachers including some members of the local elites. In many districts, the responsibility for ZSS functioning is given to voluntary organisations such as the BGVS, as in Madhubani and Dhanbad districts. However, the ZSS is supposed to work under the full authority of the District Collector (also called Deputy Commissioner, in short DC). The district-level implementation of TLC is

[1] In spite of budgetary provision for facilities to improve mass education and mass literacy in Bihar, the situation does not seem to move. Thus new schools are not open, teaching and reading materials are not provided, teachers are not paid their salary for months and the money allocated for these provisions are either manipulated or wasted. As high as '66.37 per cent of the children enrolled in Bihar drop-out without completing Classes 1-5'. See Education For All - The Indian Scene - Widening Horizons, (1993) GOI, 19.

[2] Education for All - The Indian Scene , October (1993), GOI, 61

[3] S.Y. Shah (1989), Adult Education in Bihar , 71

[4] see TLC Project Proposals for each three districts i.e. Dumka, Dhanbad and Madhubani (all undated)

dependent on two-third of its finances coming from the central government and one-third from the state government[5].

According to the 1991 Census, out of a total Bihar population of 86.37 million, more than 75.02 million live in rural areas, and 42.82 million people are 'illiterate' (see Tables 1 and 2). From these tables, one can see that out of a total 42.82 million 'illiterates' in Bihar, the state government has chosen to cover 14.39 million 'illiterates' as targets for TLC, of whom only 2.45 million are currently enrolled. Even without analysing the reliability of the statistical information, TLC's official coverage on paper comes to only 5.72 percent of the total number of 'illiterates'. The officially reported status of TLC and PLC (Post Literacy Campaign) in the state are given in Tables 3 & 4 below.

Table 1 - BIHAR: GENERAL STATISTICS[6]

Total Population	86.37 million	42.82 million illiterates above age 7 years
Male Population	45.20 million	17.25 million male illiterates above 7 years
Female Population	41.17 million	25.56 million female illiterates above 7 years
Rural Population	75.02 million	Urban Population - 11.35 million
Scheduled Caste (SC) Population	14.21%	Scheduled Tribe (ST) Population - 7.69%

Table 2 - TLC TARGET DIMENSION[7]

Total population of Bihar (1991 Census)	86.37 millions
Total illiterate population above age 7 in Bihar (1991 Census)	42.82 millions
Total TLC surveyed illiterates between age 15-35 in Bihar	14.39 millions
Total TLC surveyed illiterates in 13, out of the 16 sanctioned districts	5.78 millions
Total illiterates effectively enrolled in 13 out of 16 operational districts	2.45 millions

Table 3 - EXTENT OF TLC COVERAGE[8]

Total number of districts in Bihar	50
Total number of TLC districts (with sanctioned projects)	16
No. of districts fully operative under TLC - (still going)	13
No. of districts partly covered under TLC - (suspended)	3
No. of PLC projects sanctioned	2

[5] Annual Report 1993-94 - Literacy and Post Literacy Campaigns in India , DAE, 9
[6] ibid. (All figures based on 1991 Census). Also see Statistical Database For Literacy, Vol. 1, NIAE, 1992
[7] ibid. (All figures based on 1991 Census). Also see Statistical Database For Literacy, Vol. 1, 1992
[8] Arun Ghosh Committee Report - 1994, 15

Table 4 - TLC PROGRESS : STATUS (District-wise)[9]

District Projects only 16/50	Teaching Start Date	Present status Learning -	TLC surveyed - total illiterates	Effective Enrollment
1. Dumka	**3/94**	**in progress**	**3,84,368/3,45,000**	**3,84,368**
2. Dhanbad	**7/94**	**in progress**	**2,10,000**	**1,91,282**
3. Madhubani	**4/92**	**dragging**	**2,55,000**	**2,50,398/2,50,000**
4. Madhepura	4/92	dragging	2,85,000/2,13,600	2,13,600/2,12,000
5. Aurangabad	8/94	in progress	3,30,000	not available
6. Begusarai	12/94	new	5,80,000	not available
7. Bhojpur	1/94	in progress	4,92,491/1,61,127	1,61,127/68,194
8. Monghyr	7/94	in progress	3,50,000	not available
9. Muzaffarpur	1/91	dragging	9,50,884	2,38,000
10. Ranchi	7/91	dragging	not available	not available
11. Saharsa	4/92	dragging	4,22,877	4,22,877/264372
12. Siwan	8/93	in progress	2,15,000	2,15,000
13. Jamshedpur	10/90	dragging	70,000	42,361
14. Jamui	1/95	new	4,59,940	3,35,000
15. Khagaria	6/94	in progress	3,25,880/2,60,000	not available
16. Supaul	10/94	new	4,57,624	not available
TOTAL			57,89,064	24,54,013

Though Bihar as a whole is educationally more backward than all other states in India, there are nine districts in Bihar i.e. Kishanganj, Araria, Sahibganj, Purnea, Katihar, Poorvi Champaran, Sitamarhi, and Paschimi Champaran which are officially recognised to be particularly poor in terms of overall literacy rates. The literacy rate in these districts is below 30 percent. As we can see from Table 4 above, barring Madhepura, none of these nine districts have even been able to launch TLC. Only 16 districts out of a total 50 districts have formally launched TLCs. From the above Table, it also appears that not all these 16 districts are serious in their concern, as some are officially reported to be 'dragging'. Some like Saharsa district TLC projects merely exist on paper[10]. Only four of these districts, Madhepura, Madhubani, Dumka and Dhanbad have been reported to be successful in some respects such as mobilisation and organization of teaching and learning[11]. Three of the 16

[9] Based on NIC Computer Cell of DAE, see TLC Statistical Data at a Glance as on 23/09/1994 and Government of Bihar Review Report of TLC as on 15/08/1994. Double figures quoted above at some places are due to the two confusing sources. Here, the 'totals' in each category are taken by counting on the upper limit figures. Also the status qualification of each TLC district are given by DAE, New Delhi

[10] Personal meeting (both for interview and informal discussion) with social scientists, Shaibal Gupta (on 16/11/1994) and Vinay Kanth (on 17/11/1994) at Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), Patna. ADRI has been working as an academic platform and as a coordinating body between the Directorate of Adult Education (Bihar Government) and the TLC district bodies and voluntary organisations like BGVS.

[11] As per public opinion, media reports and informal sources in the Government (both in Patna and in New Delhi), it was reported in October-November 1994 that only four districts in Bihar were relatively successful. We visited latter three of these districts leaving Madhepura. It was reported that it was not possible to see anything in Madhepura as TLC work had stopped there for the time being. See various feature articles on Bihar in :- Gyan Vigyan Sandesh, Volumes (1/3, 1994), (1/4, 1994) and (1/5, 1994), all these three issues published by BGVS, New Delhi; Jan Siksha, September 1 (1993), Bihar Rajya Saksharata Mission Pradhikaran, Patna; Niraksharata Se Sangharsh, Part II, (1992), DAE, New Delhi, 1-11; Annual Report 1993-

district projects (i.e. Muzaffarpur, Ranchi and Jamshedpur) were suspended almost immediately after a few months due to some reported mishaps (of personality clashes between officials and with local voluntary bodies, financial bungling etc.)[12]. The remaining nine of the 16 district projects are somehow continuing sluggishly as a kind of official ritual. This was the general status of TLC coverage in Bihar at the end of 1994, though as many as seventeen districts which have very low literacy rates (e.g., below 20%) for females, low caste people and tribals have not been covered by TLC at all.

Thus we find that TLC coverage in Bihar is very limited. So for reasons of practical feasibility (of both time and money), we decided not to pursue a quantitative study but a theoretical case-study (based on empirical findings and some ethnographic field-work) of the government's conceptualisation and implementation. Our project is based on a case-study of the tribal village of Nawadih in the Jama Block of Dumka district. This village was expected to be officially declared the first totally literate tribal village in Dumka[13]. The study concentrates on ascertaining the views and perceptions of the adult educators and the 'neo-literates' who participated in the TLC. It also focuses on the nature and the effectiveness of the regular pattern of participation and teaching-learning methods used, and in particular on the learners' interaction with texts and their teachers. A specific concern of the study was to ascertain the quality and level of literacy achieved in the 3R's by the 'neo-literates'. Field-study for supplementary observation was also conducted in some other TLC villages (see Table below) in Dumka, Dhanbad and Madhubani districts. Here those observations will be used only in a comparative framework to buttress our arguments wherever necessary.

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94 on TLC and PLC compiled by DAE, New Delhi, for Bihar see pp. 47-53; Pamela Phillpose, 'Learning to Cope', Expression, supplement of the Indian Express (daily), 04/09/1994

[12] The government officials do not talk about these in a straightforward manner, but they do suggest that something happened like that. This fact emerged in several meetings with officials and activists in New Delhi and Patna, e.g., Dr. (Mrs.) Pramila Menon (Fellow at NIEPA, New Delhi) on 24/10/1994; Anurag Bhatnagar (Assistant Director, official-in-charge NLM in Bihar, D/O Education, New Delhi) on 25/10/1994; R.S. Mathur (Additional Director, Evaluation, DAE, New Delhi) on 26/10/1994; Shaibal Gupta (ADRI, Patna) on 16/11/1994; and Vinay Kanth (ADRI, Patna) on 17/11/1994.

[13] Field-study in Dumka during 21 November - 12 December 1994. We had 3-4 informal and one formal meetings with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dumka and almost everyday long chats with the Programme Officer. Both the DC and the Programme Officer, as well as the two VTs working in this village reported that the learners had completed all the three primers prescribed under TLC. Though the village was meeting all the criteria established by TLC, the Programme Officer said (on 02/12/1992) that 'we are not in a hurry to declare it so'. The DC and the Programme Officer affirmed that they wanted to make everything sure that the village was worth declaring so (Formal Interview with DC on 12/12/1994).

Other Villages Covered Under this Field-study

Districts	Villages and Blocks	Type of Target-Group under TLC coverage
Dumka	7 village in 7 blocks	mainly tribal men and women, few lower caste Hindus
Dhanbad	5 villages in 2 blocks	few tribals but mainly non-tribal coal mine workers
Madhubani	1 village in 1 block	mainly low caste Hindus & Muslim women

1.1 LITERACY PROFILE OF DUMKA

Dumka is primarily an underdeveloped tribal district with 1.5 million population. Its villages resemble medieval hamlets with no modern institutions, no modern facilities like roads, electricity, housing and health. There are no industries or mines and it is mainly dependent on rice cultivation during monsoon rains. Tribals constitute about 42 percent of the population; non-tribal populations are mainly migrants from the plains of central and northern Bihar who have settled in clusters of small towns scattered throughout the district. These small towns are local business centres and serve as the nearest consumer markets for the people of Dumka. Inaccessibility and poor infrastructure have slowed the process of development in the area. But Dumka's real life consists in small dispersed tribal hamlets with huts and thatched mud dwellings, where subsistence farming is done among the tough rocky terrain of the Chotanagpur plateau. The fertility of the soil is very poor owing to extensive erosion, acidity and low water-retaining capacity of the soil. Tribals have to migrate every season to neighbouring districts or far-off places to supplement their income through manual labour. These tribal villages are different from non-tribal villages both in linguistic character and social composition[14]. 'Santhali' happens to be a non-literary and non-standardised language, and hence government elites consider it unsuited for more literate purposes. Notwithstanding its constitutional non-recognition as a language of literacy and learning, and despite the fact that it is spoken by 3.6 million tribals of the Chotanagpur region, it has no place either in schools or in state-craft. 'Santhali' is used by tribals only as a 'domestic vernacular' with no functions except those in the home, places of rituals and the local market place. Officially at least on government records, there are some 1600 Primary Schools, 250 Middle Schools and 58 High Schools for the total of 4109 villages in Dumka[15]. All these schools are supposed to teach through the medium of standard Hindi. Teachers are mostly ill-trained non-tribals and they have to follow the

[14] This has been already discussed in the first part of this chapter. For more details, see Surendra K. Gupta, 'Traditional and Emerging Political Structures' in S.C. Dube (ed.) (1977), Tribal Heritage of India, Vol. 1 Ethnicity, Identity and Interaction , 170-174

[15] These sources are based on Dumka District TLC/PLC Proposal submitted to the Government of India. No date of its publication is given but it seems it was submitted in autumn of 1994.

standard syllabus and curriculum of the mainstream schools of non-tribal areas[16]. There are no private or model schools of the modern type except for one Navodaya Vidyalaya and the majority are poorly maintained government schools which have existed now for some decades.

Some of these schools are so poor and inadequate that no regular teaching and learning is possible. Their accessibility and usefulness in terms of actual advantages gained by local population are negligible. In most of the informal discussions with lower district officials and seven of the Key Resource Persons (KRPs) of District TLC, it emerged that hardly one-fourth of these government schools work[17]. A few villagers admitted that many schools exist only on official paper and a few of these had no buildings of their own[18]. Tribal families, and particularly tribal girls, have suffered continued disadvantage. They do not wish to attend the Hindi-medium schools and prefer to remain outside its unhelpful atmosphere, because even after learning to read and write a little on their own, they generally never make it to the higher stages of education. As a consequence, all the modern institutions which they encounter in their daily life such as the courts, district administration, teacher-training colleges, health services, banking institutions, etc. continue to be dominated by elite or literate *Dikus* (non-tribals). The class, gender and linguistic bias of these modern institutions has made them a fortified structure alien to the majority of the tribal people. The first main problem for tribal children is to overcome their own lack of motivation towards attending these impoverished schools. Secondly, they have to overcome the more significant hurdle of adapting culturally to the standard Hindi school curriculum and speech norms. There has been no attempt to change or reform the non-tribal bias in the curriculum and the language of instruction. The administration generally assumes that tribals prefer to educate themselves in the dominant language of the area. But this is only partly true. Even if true, the mistake lies in the assumed baseline of linguistic competence,

[16] Interview and group discussion on 24/11/1994 with seven of the nine District TLC Key Resource Persons (KRPs) at Masalia Block High School. These KRPs were all State High School teachers. One of them who wanted to remain anonymous, confessed that most of his colleagues in schools were incapable of teaching the tribal students in a combined medium of Hindi and Santhali.

[17] Interview and group discussion with seven KRPs on 24/11/1994 at Masalia High School, several other informal meetings with lower district officials in Dumka District Headquarters.

[18] An evening with some 32-36 villagers (including 9-10 men and women adult learners, 2 KRPs, 3VTs and a few children and old persons) who had gathered to see a *Nukkad-natak* (street play) staged by village TLC team on 02/12/1994. The two of the VTs reported that there did not exist any school building before. But as a reward for being first to start with TLC, the district administration had promised to fund for a school building and the near-by main road construction under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) - central government scheme for self-employment. Similar experiences were reported in a few villages visited in other CD Blocks in Dumka.

social knowledge and identity of the tribals which is not taken into consideration by the mainstream school curriculum and instruction.

According to the 1991 Census, Dumka has a total literacy rate of 27.9 percent[19] which is less than 30 percent - a government criterion for identifying least literate districts. However, Dumka is not included in this category as figures for Dumka are still integrated with other slightly more developed districts which formed part of the former Santhal Pargana district, of which Dumka was the headquarters. Within the 27.9% literacy in Dumka, literacy for all males is about 40% and for females is as low as 14%. Literacy for the SCs is about 17% and that for the STs about 19%. According to the 1991 Census, the total number of illiterates in the entire district is about 1.1 million but the TLC target for the age group of 10-35 has been fixed at 0.384 million only[20]. In the Jama Block where we did our field-study, it was reported by the Block Development Officer (BDO) and the Circle Officer (CO) that out of nearly 305 villages in the Block, only about 100 villages (about 35%) were actually covered by the TLC[21]. A Block is the smallest administrative unit (covering some 10-15 villages in an area of about 60-70 sq. kms.) for government planning and development projects. So we find that at each stage of implementation the coverage and scope of TLC has been narrowed down to the population or groups of 'illiterates' within convenient reach of officials. Even within this constricted coverage of TLC, we will see how the government tries to fudge its figures of literacy achievements.

2.0 LAUNCHING THE CAMPAIGN

The TLC for Dumka was approved in July 1993. A district literacy society called the Zila Saksharta Samiti (ZSS) was formally created for the implementation of the project. Officially, Dumka ZSS is a separate and an autonomous body consisting of local leaders, government officials, teachers and local organisations, but in practice it is run by the district administration under a Programme Officer who is the overall in-charge. The Programme Officer is a senior bureaucrat actively responsible for implementing TLC on a full-time basis. As was evident from the field-visit, the Programme Officer was in every sense, i.e. not only financially but also functionally and administratively, responsible to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and not to the ZSS working group members and volunteers. For example, in a meeting on December 2, 1994 of all TLC Key Resource Persons (KRPs), *Jago*

[19] Dumka District TLC Proposal, op.cit.
[20] ibid.. All figures quoted from the same document, see p. 1 and Annexure 1
[21] Discussion with BDO and CO of Jama Block on 07/12/1994

Behana (a Ladies Working Group) members and teachers held in the District Conference Hall, only the Programme Officer and the DC spoke before the audience of about 50-60. This meeting consisted of all the senior district TLC functionaries, yet no one else spoke or gave any suggestion for the programme on the basis of their own experience. The meeting was marked by monologic, one-way instruction from the DC and the Programme Officer, though with sincere concern and not much rhetoric. However, it was not a participatory event in any sense because nobody else dared to speak. It is hardly possible that any of the members who are usually trained teachers, did not wish to say anything or that they were incompetent to make suggestions. One of the teachers later explained that 'we are not supposed to speak before the *Raja* (king) of a district. He is the know-all. And who is going to risk offending him? Even otherwise, we do not have much control of the programme. Everything comes from them. We have to follow them, implement the project. We do not have any control in the decision-making. In a sense, it might be good. People will cooperate with no one except these officers'[22]. When we pointed out that this does not solve the democratic purpose of TLC, nor does it encourage personal initiative on the part of teachers and volunteers, he replied, 'that is how, at least, we are accustomed to work. But it is they ... the officers ... who should encourage us to share decision and responsibility'[23]. This attitude on the part of the senior officials is unhelpful in the long run as it only lowers the self-esteem of lower officials and adds to their disaffection and dependency. All TLC initiatives, planning and surveys were reportedly done in a manipulative way through command structures rather than through consensus, though at times, some suggestions on practical problems were sought from lower cadres[24].

Committed and well intentioned bureaucrats like the Dumka DC and the TLC Programme Officer may not have any conscious personal ideology while implementing the project, except their sense of professional commitment. However within their daily official sub-culture which itself is a part of the overall bureaucratic and elite culture existing in India, even they are susceptible to such alienating behaviour. This attitude could itself be a part of the dominant way of upbringing in Indian society. This attitude of dominance may take various forms, one of the most subtle and unrecognized form is a false generosity expressing itself in paternalism and didacticism. It is for this reason that when senior

[22] One of the KRPs (name not recorded) attending the meeting on 02/12/1994. Most interviews and discussion with the senior officials and activists were conducted mainly in Hindi but also in a mix of Hindi and English. However, our discussion with learners and VTs was generally in popular Hindi or in the local dialect.
[23] The afore-mentioned KRPs (name not recorded) after the meeting on 02/12/1994.
[24] The afore-mentioned KRP on 02/12/1994; and the same was shared by a group of 4-5 teachers having tea outside the Conference Hall.

bureaucrats, instead of listening to people, preach to them about how to cast off their habits of laziness, quarrelsomeness, indecisiveness, lack of organization, they do not realise that they too are perpetuating a wrong attitude. Their miseducation lies in the fact that it did not allow them to distinguish between supposedly intrinsic inferiority of ordinary people and the violence or manipulation of the dominant ideology. Bureaucracy in India has added enormous power and prestige to itself by planning, introducing and controlling a plethora of centrally sponsored schemes in the rural areas across regions. Centralised planning has given them immense power of manipulation at the grass-roots level. Senior bureaucrats leave the people disaffected, gratifying themselves on self-aggrandizement. This attitude and process has 'undermined the possibility of establishing a system of impersonal authority based on the procedural rationality of democracy. As traditional sources of authority have declined and the development of rational, legal bases of authority has been thwarted, personal rule has come to prevail'[25]. Thus consequences of miseducation (referred to earlier) and self-aggrandizement on the part of bureaucrats marks the nature of official initiative towards people's development, and this usually leads to inactivity, non-development and mass apathy.

There are usually four phases of a TLC implementation in any district: (a) planning and survey, (b) mobilisation or environment-building, (c) teaching and learning of the 3Rs, and finally (d) evaluation and monitoring. After intense planning of target, resources, cost, etc., the District Project Proposal is sent for approval to the state and the central governments by the District administration. With the release of financial sanctions, the district TLC committee is set up and it takes up a survey to identify the actual number of learners, volunteer teachers and trainers to be involved, language to be adopted for learning, and other material requirements. These were the only specific aims of the survey in Dumka. The conceptual idea about these surveys is limited to non-essential findings which consisted in a simple fact-finding exercise, or a head-counting exercise calling for identification of number of persons and items involved in a project. The district officials were usually unaware that such surveys are essentially an educational process which involve not only counting of persons but also an investigation of critical attitudes, values, aspirations and linguistic resources possessed by a community. When we ask any district official 'what was the task of your proposed survey', the common answer is 'counting of number of learners, villages, TLC centres required, VTs, Resource Persons, etc.'. Even the choices of the language of teaching and instruction and of reading materials in Dumka as we found out

[25] Atul Kohli (1997), 'Crisis of Governability' in Sudipta Kaviraj (ed.) Politics in India , 388

during our field-visit, was nothing more than a simple head-counting exercise. The officials did not concern themselves with the nature and norm of linguistic of learners. Nor did they asses the learner's competency level, to ascertain the nature of their vocabulary, syntax, the content of their usual discussions, etc. The survey team did not have any informal discussion with the target-group and other community members to ascertain their linguistic behaviour and norms. The problem with these survey teams at the district level is that they are incompetent or ill-trained to handle the sophisticated processes of investigation into people's linguistic and social behaviour, and the complex dynamics of local knowledge and local culture. The more educators and educands conjointly participate in an investigation of people's thinking, community language and culture, and mutually shared experiences, they educate each other, and continue to investigate further. But the TLC guidelines vaguely ask for a more complex operation at this level. 'Education and thematic investigation, in the problem-posing concept of education, are simply different moments of the same process'[26]. This process is also the first step towards developing and understanding communication and building mutual trust between the educator (officials) and the educand (learners). The TLC guideline is not explicit about the specific functions of district level surveys, though here and there it has cautioned that the 'survey is not only a head-counting exercise, but also a tool of planning, of mobilisation of people and of environment building'[27].

In Dumka, an appeal was made to invite the services of volunteers. Some 4,116 Volunteer Teachers (VTs), 150 Master Trainers (MTs) and 5 Key Resource Persons (KRPs) were available for a target population of 29,156 'illiterates' in the Jama Block. In Nawadih village of Jama Block, for the 73 'illiterates' enrolled there were 7 VTs and 1 MT to teach them the 3Rs. The VTs and MTs, also called *Akshar Sainiks* (literacy soldiers), are the vanguard of the TLC. The main responsibility of achieving the goals of TLC, teaching and motivating adult learners, lies with them. VTs are the only persons immediately available to the 'learners' on an everyday basis. Initially they had to undertake a village survey, motivate the villagers and then organise and conduct literacy classes, make periodic reviews, tackle the problem of fizzling out of spirit among learners, establish continuous feedback with the programme managers, that is, district officials. These VTs and MTs are young boys and girls, semi-literate in the technical sense that they themselves can hardly read, write and comprehend modern standardised languages like Hindi, Bengali or English. They have had an average of 8-9 years of irregular schooling in the local village school which everybody

[26] Paulo Freire (1972), Pedagogy of the Oppressed , 81
[27] see Appendix 1 at the end.

including the students themselves consider inferior. Most of these VTs and MTs have no hope for further study or employment in white-collar jobs in mainstream institutions dominated by non-tribals. The MTs are slightly more educated, with approximately 12-13 years of formal learning in a local school or college. They are responsible for supervising and training VTs as well as teaching the 3Rs to the adult learners. Above the MTs, KRPs supervise the overall implementation of the TLC in various villages in a particular Block. These KRPs are mainly non-tribals, trained graduate teachers of government High Schools.

Though given two-to-three days' orientation training, these volunteers claimed to be unaware of 'dialogue' and discussion methods in language-teaching[28]. They reported that they teach learners the 3Rs directly from the given primers in a mechanical way. They never conducted any group discussion, narration or oral question-answer sessions on the topics given in the primers. They were neither fully competent to do so nor was it ever suggested to them that they should do so. On being told about these methods they generally showed blank faces and accepted their ignorance[29]. They argued however that in their informal hours of chit-chat, they did discuss the nature of reading materials and the TLC emphasis on teaching methods. They demonstrated some skills in using examples and construction of stories, and contextualising of their own experiences in their mother-tongue. They however admitted that it required hard work and patience, and some amount of thinking to practice such aspects in a standard language. With some economic incentives, VTs' training programmes could be made more useful. It is necessary to point out that the VTs and MTs, usually poor and unemployed, are not paid for their services either in cash or kind. There is no reward for them except their own personal satisfaction. Most VTs and MTs are culturally sensitive, intelligent and competent to communicate with their learners. However, due to inadequate training and exposure in modern languages, and their unimaginative methods, they are not very successful in teaching the adult learners the given language texts (e.g. Hindi primers) in a wider communicative perspective. Short orientation programmes for MTs and VTs remain inadequate and imperfect[30]. The communicative competency possessed by both the learners and the teachers can be used as a resource for further

[28] On 30/11/1994, the day Governor of Bihar visited Dumka, most VTs, MTs, and KRPs had assembled in honour of visit. At the end of the day, we had a group discussion with 14-15 VTs and 4 MTs about the various teaching methods they used, problems and responses they faced.

[29] Informal discussions with 2VTs, 1MT and three sets of learners' groups in Nawadih on 10/12/1994 and on 11/12/1994. One exclusive group discussion was held with these VTs, MTs and the village chief of Nawadih on the 10th of December. Nawadih was visited earlier too, but in the company of senior district officials.

[30] Harsh Sethi (1989), 'Literacy Drives', Seminar, February ; Tushar Mukherji (1995), 'Total Literacy Campaign in West Bengal: An Appraisal', EPW, October 28, 2722 ; and Sadhna Saxena (1993), 'Limits and Consequences of Literacy Programmes', EPW, February 20-27, 323

language teaching, and this can be done only when literacy programmes focus on a communicative grammar rather than on a decontextualised grammar, form and structure of a standardised language. Because it is a low-cost programme, the TLC has to depend on local volunteers. In remote, backward villages it is difficult to get qualified volunteer-teachers. It is better that the TLC educators should concentrate on the available resources of VTs towards a communicative teaching.

The second stage of the TLC in Dumka district was the 'environment building' phase, in which a few teams of young musical and theatrical artists went from village to village with their songs to attract crowds and persuade people to learn to read and write. They spread messages on the advantages of literacy and the evils of being 'illiterate' through street plays, songs, banners, wall writings, posters, etc. These strategies, particularly the street plays and songs were quite effective and very popular with the adult learners because they were patterned on tribal folk and work songs. However, these activities were limited to one or two hours of fun during the first one or two days of publicity, persuading people in the end to join the TLC. Despite their popularity, their linguistic forms, themes and aspirations visible in tribal folk-songs (features of their 'oral' culture) are not included in the classroom teaching or in the development of TLC primers.

The third stage was the running of TLC classes by the VTs (one VT for each ten to fifteen learners) in each village. The VTs were supposed to teach the adult learners for a minimum of 100 hours a year in order to complete the three Primers. Classes were conducted on a regular basis of 12-15 hours a month, for a whole year except for the high season of harvest. Most of the learners in Nawadih village were reported to have completed all three primers. An unsatisfactory performance in skills of 3Rs was evident among the learners who finished the programme either in Nawadih village or other villages in Dumka, though it was clear that some teaching and learning activities were conducted on a regular basis. Hence it now becomes necessary to examine the processes through which the TLC conducted its operations, in order to evaluate their actual implementation and their appropriateness in terms of the theory of literacy promotion in India. The analysis will try to present the viewpoint of the adult learners, how they have come to perceive the TLC, its functions and its uses. This coincides with the fourth stage of TLC, i.e. monitoring and evaluation. At each stage of completing one of the three primers, the district officials are supposed to have regular monitoring and evaluation of the progress among learners and the overall implementation of the programme. All these stage-wise activities were, reportedly, done on a regular basis in Dumka.

With the completion of these four stages, both the educators and the educands realised that, in practice, TLC's goal of making all the adult population (15-35 age group) literate within a short time was too ambitious. The local people not only doubted its efficacy but also its usefulness and intent. This may be considered the main ideological and structural deficiency of the TLC programme from the viewpoint of adult learners. This may explain why it went off the track after one or two years in many districts like Muzaffarpur, Ranchi and Jamshedpur in Bihar. Asked why they joined in the TLC programme in the first place, all the respondents showed their eagerness to learn something which may be useful in their daily life. However, this eagerness was mixed with doubts about the government's intentions and willingness. The district officials too had their own doubts whether learners and volunteers would be willing to sustain their interest for long. There existed some mutual distrust about each other's intentions and capacities. These doubts are partly related to conceptual deficiencies and inconsistencies in the methods of the TLC, which are only vaguely understood at the lower levels of TLC organisation and district administration. On the other hand, the tribal people's doubts about the district official's intentions seem justified in the light of their historical experience. The tribal people see these senior district officials as being similar to '*Maharajahs*' (Kings), '*Rajas*' (Lords) and aristocrats, moving in cars with an army of 5-6 servants, and living in big bungalows. People see them as smug, self-indulging, pleasure-seeking and powerful. Senior district officials as a status group see themselves as virtuous, educated and powerful, so that none in the district can rightfully challenge them. This attitude enforces their 'technocratic' and bureaucratic approach to state intervention in local development.

Another main structural/conceptual deficiency of the programme from the viewpoint of adult learners is that both its general activities and reading materials are of little significance in their daily life and for cultural empowerment. It does not cater to any of their personal and social communication, and hence it is boring. It offers them very little joy. In Nawadih, when the respondents were asked what advantages TLC offered them, most (45/47) said with disappointment: 'it does not offer us anything great'[31]. Some (31/47) said, 'it is nothing but a waste of time. The government on occasions comes up with these programmes to show us that they are doing something for us'. A few (7/47) were cynical,

[31] Group discussions with three groups of available learners in Nawadih on the 7th, 10th and 11th of December 1994. These responses were also heard in all other villages visited in Dumka.

'isa budhauti mein hamlog padh-likh ke kya karenge' (At our advanced age what will we do with reading and writing)[32]. Most of them, both the learners and volunteer teachers had joined these programmes for a number of reasons other than the real benefits the TLC could offer them. Some of them had joined because they had some extra leisure time to engage in a group activity which would offer them some relaxation. A few others had joined because of reasons of conscience. Some thought 'it was a useful thing in itself' - a cultural reason pertaining to social belief that education and literacy are good in themselves. Others (probably half) had joined because of pressure from local officials and elites. None in the entire group, even the most concerned and well-informed officials, were optimistic about the end results of the programme. Both the Deputy Commissioner and the Programme Officer who were in-charge of the TLC in the district, and who were otherwise committed to its official success, considered it mere tokenism. One of them said: '... the chief interest in floating a campaign like this ... lies mainly in publicity for the government, ... for the party in power, ... its public policies, and its achievements through literacy cadres'[33]. For them, it was a 'package' of 'usual' government business, but they asserted that since 'Dumka was a very backward tribal district with extremely low literacy' they had 'all the eagerness to bring it to the literacy level in other districts'[34]. The rhetoric in the above two statements of Dumka's senior officials is clear to locals who see their meaning in other contexts of official behaviour.

In Dumka, it was found that to some extent district officials had appealed to the local people. That is one reason why they were successful in carrying out the programme in almost all the villages, drawing thousands of enthusiastic learners and hundreds of volunteers. However, the programme itself was being implemented out of a sense of benevolence rather than through seeing it as an imaginative artefact. The village Chief said: 'It is 'a *sarkari* (government) '*daftari'* programme of literacy, which though good in-itself as *akshar gyan* (3Rs training), offers no joy or curiosity'. He further said: 'This village is soon going to be declared as the first 'literate' village in Dumka, but we are sure after a year or two nothing is going to happen'[35]. What he intended to convey by the term '*daftari*' was a derogatory remark meaning 'ready-made official formula', something which is carried out

[32] Group discussion with adult learners and VTs in Nawadih on the 7th, 10th and 11th of December 1994
[33] Several conversations with the Programme Officer whom I met almost everyday during my stay in Dumka and three personal meetings with the Deputy Commissioner (DC). A more structured interview with Dumka's DC was held on 12/12/94.
[34] Interview with Dumka DC on 12/12/1994
[35] Nawadih village Chief and two VTs in a group discussion on 10/12/1994

as official business with no serious consequences. He also pointed out that both the public and officials will forget the learning of the 3Rs in due course:

> *bhai-sahab, thoda-sa padh likh kar kya phayeda, jo ham bhool jayen aur bad mein koi matlab nahin. padhane-likhane aur sikhane ki iccha to lag-bhag sab mein thori bahut hoti hai, agar mauka mile to. ab isa bacche ko lijiye. yah padhana nahi chahega kyoki wo iska na phayada dekh raha hai, nahi hi iska istemaal dekha raha hai. ab jawan log to thora bahut chahate hi hai, jinko jarurat parati hai. ... ab dekhiye, yahan na koi suvidha hai, na koi upay hai. na kaam ki suvidha, naa padhane-likehane ya kucch sikhane- jaanane ka uppaay. magar, phir bhi ek baat hai ki dekha-dekhi log seekhate hain, aur suvidha ke hisaab se pragati hoti hai. Hamaare yahaan ek aur phayada hai. adivaasi logon ke beech mein abhi utana hera-pheri nahi aaya hai jitana, bahari duniya mein hai. isaliye, sahi ummeed bane aur sahi upaay ke saath sahi suvidha ho to, hamaren bacche log jyada mehnat kar sakatein hai. agar thori bhi dheelayi ya beimaani kise ke taraf se aayi in schemes mein to hera-pheri shuru ho jaayega adivasiyon mein bhi.*[36]
>
> (Brother, of what value is learning of 3Rs if we tend to unlearn it, and later, do not associate with it. Everybody has some desire to learn reading, writing and other things, if there is a chance to learn these skills in life. (Pointing to a child nearby) Take the case of this boy. He doesn't want to read because he sees neither its benefit nor its use. Now, some youths do certainly want to learn 3Rs, because they need it. ... But see, there is neither a facility nor a means for learning things. Neither there is work (employment), nor are there means for learning reading, writing or acquiring other skills and knowledge. People learn from social interactions (*dekha-dekhi*) and progress comes with opportunity and means available for things. One thing positive about our tribal society is that it is still not too corrupted, unlike the outside world (of non-tribals). Hence, if there is some real hope, with right means and minimum good facility available for learning these skills, our children could work harder. If there is any lapse or dishonesty on part of anybody in implementing these schemes, it is likely even the tribals would become corrupted.)

Earlier, scholars had depicted 'illiterate' societies such as that of the tribals as pre-logical, non-scientific, primitive, pre-historical, and simple and naive in terms of analytical thinking and conscious organisation of thought[37]. But, here in the above utterance the tribals appear to be conscious and logical persons. One can discern various elements of our literacy theory in the above statement: the tribal Chief is thinking of learning in a context of use-value, communication skills, sharing and participation, capacity and opportunity for growth and social mobility, and finally trust among participating members. The tribal utterance, as we shall further see, is patterned on oral engagement in rational thinking which are generally compressed in form of phrases, proverbs and canonical expressions. The village Chief uses a complex concept (*dekha-dekhi*) which indicates both openness to knowledge and sensitivity to public as well as private interests. The phrase *'dekha-dekhi'* stands for observing others

[36] In personal interview and informal discussion with Nawadih village Chief on 10/12/1994
[37] Brian Street (1984), Literacy in theory and practice , 19-43

and learning both the language and the conduct. The phrase has both egalitarian and hierarchical connotations. It expresses respect for learning and equal capacity of individuals to learn. While describing the daily practices of schools in the village, he also suggested an apparent contradiction between the irrelevance of what was being taught at schools and yet a respect for learning and regard for the value of literacy. Tribals have always associated themselves with different forms of knowledge according to the stages of life and according to the communication needs. They have an egalitarian and functional concern for learning, and their approach is different from the hierarchy and control functions characteristic of dominant literacy in schools and educational institutions. In contrast, they also have a broader cultural concern which assigns hierarchical roles for adults and community leaders or public figures who are expected to recognise inter-generational differences and hence of progress. When asked to comment on all this, he reframed and reformulated the question of what makes a literate person. He acknowledged that schooling was as a modern 'thing' - '*naye jamane ki cheej*' . The modern school is supposed to train, discipline, care for and prepare a child for modern professions. But 'where is the modern life here in Dumka?', he asked.

Pointing to the irrelevance of what is being taught in schools these days, he argued that school's contribution to tribal children was, at best, passive (*dheela* or loose) while an interactive situation (*dekhana-sunana*) is active. Interactive processes shape the younger generations in more fundamental ways than the existing schools. The school as a person or as an impersonal agent (*bahari cheej* or an alien thing as he called it) may or may not take responsibility for educating the child but the tribal society will. The school may or may not be able to involve itself actively in the process by which a child becomes a finished person, but the society or the community which s/he interacts with is like a natural mother, a well-knit kin group playing an active role for the growing child. But learning is linked not only to the social interactional context; according to the Chief, it is also linked to the shared context of means and opportunities available to a community. The distinctions of *'dekha-dekhi'* (shared learning), '*upaay*' (means), '*suvidha*' (chance and opportunity) and '*pragati*' (progress) work for the tribals in ensembles of symbols, experiences and contexts of incentives which are more or less shared. It appeared that tribals have more than one concept of the person. In a community life characteristic of tribal existence, the acting and experiencing 'self' must have the capacity to be concerned about others. The self must be able to 'feel for' others. The individual must have a capacity for responsible action in a moral community. All this requires a dynamic 'self' which is, more or less, a dynamic

centre of awareness, with emotion, judgement and self-expression, and that is what constitutes a literate person.

Tribal linguistic distinctions, conveyed to us in popular Hindi of Dumka, contain words and phrases which have different implications. These linguistic distinctions serve different communicative purposes both for new ways of thinking involving strategic tasks and rhetoric as well as canonical expressions legitimised by the notion of the elder's wisdom. For tribals oral words and phrases including canonical expressions carry experiences and meanings which are as forceful as the words and phrases of the modern authoritative textbooks. The oral utterances of tribals can be seen to carry a historical consciousness in the compressed forms of phrases, proverbs and narratives which are used to constitute social reality. What we generally consider as 'mythic' or pre-historical, is actually a kind of discursive practice. Their utterances are a part of Santhali cultural understanding which has a unique grammar and a language of making sense of the world. Here they contest the language of change, literacy-learning and identity even if they do not easily adopt modern standard literacy. Writing carries a more instrumental value in modern societies which require distant and abstract forms of communication. But the official rhetoric of standard literacy in the written medium for a tribal society may or may not be of equal value for their reproductive and functional needs. In Dumka, the tribal attitude to language learning, relatedness and identity in the context of modern life is more complex and abstract and less malleable than the officials think. For the Santhals of Dumka, our field-study showed that the essential idea in language learning is that people learn in a web of linguistic relations and interaction between communities. We have seen in our background discussion that the desire to learn a modern language (i.e. Hindi) in the Santhals' case is created by the socio-political logic of growing democracy and cultural integration with the mainstream cultures. The tribal attitude towards literacy consists not in a purely instrumental outlook, as is evident in Haryana, but in its empowering capacity. Therefore, merely knowing the words without knowing the world is of no consequence and sustained interest for the tribals of Dumka.

Most of the learners lacked self-confidence when they were asked to read or write something from their prescribed primers. Except for writing a few names and reading a few mugged-up stories, they were unable to recognise or distinguish between simple words with similar or same meanings: for example, words like *khet* (farm), *khalihan* (farm), *maidan* (field or farm) taken from their prescribed primers. One common and standard test for 'word-recognition' given to them was a group of three words which included the names of

their district, their state and their country. Under this test, out of the 73 learners enrolled in Nawadih TLC and 47 learners available for a discussion-cum-interview, only 38 could identify their district name, some 8 identified the word 'Bihar', but surprisingly nobody could identify the word 'Bharat' (India)[38]. These words are there in their prescribed primers but because of their narrow and decontextualised use in the TLC primers, both the learners and VTs hardly even bothered to know the significance of these words. Certainly, some of these words are not part of their daily language use. Another reason is the mechanical way in which learning the alphabet and words is taught as an additive process, i.e. from alphabets - to words - to phrases - to sentences and then - to paragraphs with emphasis on syntax and grammar[39].

Another conceptual deficiency of this programme from the learner's point of view is that the TLC, like a school textbook for children, puts a heavy premium on the learning of the 3Rs. Although the 'target' time framework is the main defining feature of a government project, the pressure of this time framework in fact kills the pleasure of learning. The tribals of Nawadih have sufficient 'oral' proficiency in 'Santhali' and to some extent in popular Hindi through everyday interaction at work, market places, village gatherings and other face to face interactions. They have acquired oral skills and speech norms which are common to most languages. These linguistic skills and forms could be used in literacy learning of TLC programme. In actual practice, the district administration has put a heavy premium on enrolment and rote and mechanical learning, but little on discursive skills and communicative competence. Most of the respondents were found to utter: 'what are we going to learn in ten months?', 'what is the use even if we learn a few things'. The narrow preoccupations of the state and district level TLC officials undermine the TLC's basic principles or the larger goal of creating a 'learning society'.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS OF TLC

Literacy campaigns in Bihar have a history of being pulled in different directions by differing interests. Social groups have always seen the pedagogical intent of literacy campaigns to be of less importance than the social, political and linguistic consciousness it creates among the participants. For example, about literacy campaigns in Bihar, which were marked by great enthusiasm and mass aspiration during the last two decades before independence, S. Y. Shah writes 'while the British supported the movement mainly to divert

[38] Three separate group discussions with learners in Nawadih on the 7th , 10th and 11th of December.
[39] For a detailed analysis of language and content of TLC Primers see Chapter Six

the attention of the students and the educated masses from the ongoing freedom struggle, the Indian leaders viewed it as a means of keeping in touch with the masses, and mobilising and motivating them to participate in the freedom movement'[40]. But internally, he writes, the 'progress of the literacy campaign was often hampered by communal clashes, national calamities and the rigid attitude of certain local leaders. In Gaya and Shahabad districts, the organisers of the campaign encountered considerable opposition from many Brahmins, Rajputs and rich Zamindars'[41]. The upper castes and other local entrenched interests who have always dominated subordinate groups like lower castes, women and tribal people, see such group activities, even for purposes like literacy, as potentially dangerous to their authority and domination.

Thus involvement in any community development project such as literacy training encounters varying levels of opposition and cooperation from various groups who attach different meanings to literacy programmes. In the case of the present TLC, all major political parties and upper caste leaders and organisations in the state are either indifferent or opposed to its effective implementation[42]. Men in general are indifferent towards literacy training for their women, for fear of making them assertive, and also because of the traditional stigma which barred women (particularly of higher castes) from working and assembling in groups outside their homes[43]. Thus Manju Jha, a female village coordinator (MT) in Madhubani district, explained that 'while 80% of the Harijan (untouchable) women in her area were happy to join TLC, it was difficult to attract the upper-caste women'[44]. According to Kalyan Chaudhary, the Chief District Coordinator, 'the most threatening factor for the Campaigners was the attitude of the upper-castes and vested interests, who were unthinkingly suspicious because mainly lower-caste people and women had joined in this literacy programme'[45]. Similarly the mafia and extortionists in Dhanbad district, who make big money illegally from the 'illiterate' workers of the coal mines, see TLC as weakening their hold on them with the rise of group consciousness among workers. *Rangdaari* (illegal extortion) 'as an institution' in this area 'goes back at least 40 years. Today it has become institutionalised and its beneficiaries include politicians, Bharat Coking Coal Limited

[40] Shah, op.cit., 35
[41] op.cit., 28
[42] Field-reports from districts visited in Bihar and Haryana. In every place, this lack of administrative and political will was reported to be the main obstacle in forging a fruitful and sustained literacy programme. This has been also noted by the Report of the Expert Group 1994 , Section 6.13, 30
[43] Field-reports from various district TLC members, but see the Report of the Expert Group 1994 , 30
[44] Visit to Madhubani 2 Jan - 7 Jan 1995; Manju Jha quoted in Pamela Phillpose, 'Learning to Cope', op.cit.
[45] Interview and discussion with Kalyan Chaudhary (Madhubani, 02/01/1995). Similar experiences from field-visit to Dhanbad. Also observed by Pamela Phillpose, op.cit.

(BCCL) officials and officers in the local police and administration'[46]. To the 'illiterate' workers of the Dhanbad coal-fields, TLC only helped them to articulate their feelings, at least to talk uninhibitedly in groups about such illegal practices. Earlier, workers thought it was normal practice for middlemen to have some share in their money because they provided them security of jobs, but when they started asserting their right to have a full share of the wages, it led to conflict and stoppage of work at the loading-points.

Secular group interaction under TLC has also helped people to rise above certain orthodox feelings, prejudices and practices of caste, religion and women's segregation. For the first time, women in large numbers in both districts (Dhanbad and Madhubani) were seen to interact and talk freely with other women, men and strangers at their place of meeting, a phenomenon which is otherwise unusual in public places in rural Bihar. Speech participation and interaction through group activities, whether TLC or any other social and political movement, such as the national movement and backward class movement, has always enabled the ordinary people to improve their communicative competence. The enrichment of their oral capacities through various public activities has also endowed the Biharis with a distinctive subaltern cosmopolitan identity that distinguishes them from the country's other impoverished states[47].

3.1 PEDAGOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

All the three TLC districts visited in Bihar were officially claimed to be 'successful'. Among these, both relatively successful and unsuccessful villages were visited. However, for the case study we concentrate only on Nawadih, supposedly the first 'totally literate' village in Dumka district by TLC norms. The TLC norms prescribe that all those villages/districts which achieve basic literacy level in the 3Rs and numeracy (based on a simple test) among 70-80% of the target group are declared 'totally literate'. These tests are based on exercises given at the end of each lesson in their primer. These contain 'reading and writing of words', 'fill in the missing letters or words', 'spotting of errors in spelling', 'addition, subtraction and multiplication', etc. which are generally supposed to have been drilled by learners earlier. For the 70 people in this village enrolled under TLC, an internal evaluation of achievements in the 3Rs was conducted by ZSS Dumka during the spring of 1995[48]. Out of these 13 were found to be absent due to seasonal out-migration. So out of the

[46] Pamela Phillpose, op.cit.
[47] Kanchan Gupta (1995), 'A pan-Bihari identity, not caste, can save Bihar', The Pioneer, March 29
[48] *Akil Batti*, TLC Dumka, Internal Evaluation Report (and Marksheet) received from the Programme Officer (Dumka) vide letter no. III/ZSS dated 01/04/1995

remaining 57 adult learners, the ZSS evaluation found 44 scoring 60-87% in the combined test for elementary reading, writing and arithmetic. Nine of the learners scored 51-59% and one learner got just 35%, as he failed to obtain any marks in arithmetic. This internal evaluation by TLC norms shows a high level of achievement in pedagogical terms. Almost similar levels of achievement were reported in the internal evaluation of the other three districts.

However, pedagogical achievements, even purely in terms of skill in the basic 3Rs, independently studied during this fieldwork, were quite disappointing, compared to official claims. Even the Report of the Expert Group (1994) noted that these internal evaluations in each TLC district are 'normally based on information gathered through routine channels' which are 'not always dependable. ... Quite a few of the reports give a picture far removed from the reality, and are apparently oriented to get some funds released from the NLM. The problem is systemic, and it is not enough to merely criticise the concerned authorities; one has to consider basic systemic reform'[49]. The same was evident from our field-study in Bihar, particularly in Dumka where we found that none of the 47 learners (out of a total 70) available for personal discussion were fully confident in writing and reading words from their primers. Our discussion generally centred around a questionnaire (see Appendix 2). It consisted of a whole range of questions on methods of reading, learning awareness, text and context awareness, and questions on language of group and media interaction. To ascertain the level of new skills learnt by learners, we asked them to read and write simple words or paragraphs taken randomly from their primers. Though they could read and write slowly a few familiar words from their primers, unfamiliar words were more difficult for them. Their meanings and contexts were mostly unknown to them, e.g., words like *kila* (fort), *katar* (queue), *sapana saakaar* (fulfillment of a dream), etc. from the Bihar Primer-I were unclear to them[50].

As mentioned earlier, in the standard test given to learners during our field-work for recognition of the names of the district, state and country, it is important to note that most of the learners failed to identify the latter two words. They would generally identify their district's name but were unable to identify the other two words or names. They were not familiar with words like 'Bihar' and 'Bharat' (India), as their own world of everyday social transaction is limited to their own district or the neighbouring districts, or at times to migration destinations like Bengal and Assam. 'Bihar' and 'Bharat' as territorial political

[49] Report of the Expert Group (1994) , Section 4.2, 21
[50] Bihar Primer, *Hamari Kitaab* - *Praveshika*, Part I , (1994)

and national entities were unfamiliar, though many of them knew vaguely about Patna and Delhi as *'chotki sarkar'* (little government) and *'barki sarkar'* (big government) referring to regional and central governments respectively. One or two could at times identify the word 'Bihar' as their regional political community, but no one could tell anything about the word 'Bharat' (India). Local people encounter the state only in the form of everyday administration (what they call *sarkar*), and also at times during assembly and parliamentary elections. Their encounters with the state during legal-administrative transactions and in public discourses about affairs of the government have made the concept of '*sarkar*' (administration or government) visible or transparent. Certain abstract concepts such as 'nation', 'state', 'subject and citizens', 'duties and obligation' and some proper names such as 'Bharat' and 'Bihar' are still unfamiliar to them. These constitute a decontextualised catalogue of information which hardly makes sense to them.

The reasons for this lack of a context for the 3Rs are probably rooted in TLC's limited focus on the uses of literacy for adult learners. Most of the respondents had come to accept its limited functional value for writing and signing one's name, filling up bank forms and keeping an account of their business. 98% of the learners responded to only these uses of literacy. Only one or two among the VTs and MTs but none among the learners could relate its use to the development of speech articulation, coherent intellectual thinking and effective expression. They were hardly able to realise that in the adult stage of life they too could enjoy the pleasures of reading and writing and possibly understand their life and the world around them better. Even when they welcomed the TLC initiative, which they thought would enable them to do some complex intellectual things, they found the actual conditions disappointing. Most of them (44/47) felt 'we are being cheated', 'we are treated as children waiting to learn a, b, c, and things like cleanliness and family planning', 'there is nothing for us in these primers', 'it is boring/uninteresting', 'a waste of time'[51] etc.. All of them felt that it had nothing much to offer except for some *'akshar pehchan'* (recognition of words) rather than *'akshar-gyan'* (knowledge of words). Asked what they meant by the distinction between *'akshar pehchan'* and *'akshar gyan'* one of the more learned VTs explained:

> 'Only after *'akshar gyan'*, you can distinguish a good '*boli*' from a bad '*boli*' (speech). You must be able to do good thinking. If you think rightly, children will also learn to think through your words. Whatever you say or do, your children are going to judge you on that. It all depends on your words, (*boli*) and your action or deeds (*kathni aur karani*). This is how children's '*buddhi*' (mind, understanding) will develop. When you utter a thing (statement) or comment to me, or I comment

[51] Group discussion with TLC adult learners in Nawadih village on three separate occasions, i.e. 7th, 10th and 11th of December 1994.

on somebody, one starts thinking and contextualising it. One analyses the '*bolchaal*' (ways with words), how you say, when you say, and with what intention ... etc. This is not the way only I think; all these people here think the same way'.[52]

Much becomes clear from what he implies by the distinction between '*akshar pehchan*' and '*akshar gyan*'. After learning to read and write, the VT feels that a person should be able to think about and judge a speaker's utterances, a statement or a text, and also to express his/her interpretation correctly. He also makes it clear that a person who has learnt to read, write and express himself in the proper context, is a literate agent in the sense that s/he enables others (his/her children and peer groups) to make sense of a speech in its general, social and political contexts, to 'think and express oneself about something cogently' as he put it. What it meant to 'think and express cogently', he was not sure - whether it was pertaining to an existing belief or a moral and religious order or critical thinking in general - he was even less sure. But one aspect of which he was certain was the ability to think and rethink either intuitively (*dil ki soch*) or rationally (*dimaag ki soch*).

There is a lot of suggestiveness in these two main categories of literate thinking. Most ordinary people think more by intuition than by reason alone. Intuitive knowledge is gained by perception, insight, empathy and feelings, rather than rationally and discursively. Both intuition and reason are common to all individuals and cultures, but it may vary depending on the historical and technological development of a community. Tribals are culturally more prepared for intuition and empathy. As a close-knit kin community, they intimately identify with each other[53]. Their concepts of shared substance are embedded in the social and oral practices which shape and amplify various linguistic distinctions. Their linguistic practice reproduces these identifications and distinctions. That is why, when the VT used the term '*boli*', he did not mean simply a speech variety or a language dialect but also shared meanings. He explained that 'when somebody speaks, it involves twists and turns of words, actions and facial expressions'. What he also intended to convey was that tribal people, though hardly proficient in Hindi, can still make out and reflect on the intentions of the speaker, as well as some meanings, in an utterance, with the help of a few common elements of interactional speech. Thus making sense or recognizing meaning involves not only reading words or the content of a speech or an utterance but also a sense of 'who' is talking, to 'whom' s/he is talking, in 'what manner' and with 'what authority' one is talking, i.e. the discourse of 'we' and 'they'. In an interactive speech or text,

[52] One of the VTs in Nawadih on 10/12/1994 and 11/12/1994 in a group discussion with other learners.
[53] S.K. Singh (1990), Santhal: Jiwan Aur Sanskriti

communication is either established or distorted not only by the kind of language used and its shared meanings, but also by the identity bond between the speaker and the audience, between the text and the reader.

Seen in this context of the cultural and historical identity of tribals, TLC group meetings with higher officials, and the practice of learning reading and writing with the help of primers, can be seen to alienate tribal adult learners from their social practices and traditions in more than one way. For example, the overall language used both in their primers and their teaching methods have strong moral undertones, as if they are children who knew little about their own world. To cite an example, Lesson 4 of the Bihar Primer I, titled '*Ab To Galati Theek Karein'* (Let Us Now Correct Our Mistakes) contains statements that hold the 'illiterate' population responsible for various social problems and prescribes certain do's and don'ts for them (see Chapter Six). Lesson 1 of the Bihar Primer III contains a statement on Birsa Munda, a tribal leader of Ranchi district. It is moralistic in its message and presents some distortions; for example, Birsa is shown to have been heavily influenced by the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (detail in Chapter Six). Other language-lessons contain alien standardised Hindi idioms and words, and moral prescriptions related to health, hygiene, family planning and tree plantation. The TLC primers also use a text-like flat language, with standard subject-object-verb sentence structures as in - '*Birsa ne julm ke khilaf awaj utthai'* - which is different from both popular Hindi and popular Santhali patterns of speech. In Santhali language or popular Hindi, we find repetitions and predominance of the verb. For example, in popular Santhali (a mix of Santhali and Hindi but more of Santhali in it) consider this: *'O, lok padha-haak ched me se jibon re, akil te dom khato geya re. Dekho se re, des manjhi, pargana manjhi, ko hamaro bud binu jumi dubi gel'* (O people, learn, read and write, we are losing our mind. See, O Chief, O leaders, O parganamen, because we lost our mind, we lost our lands too)[54]. Here, the underlined words and phrases show the predominance of verb in use in Santhali speech patterns. It is not that the TLC text-stories are completely unreal, but, because the voice in the text and its language is that of an outsider, there is a communication gap between the learner and the text. To question these texts is not merely to question the authority (the authors who are from outside) but to question the context of the text's presentation and the text itself, and this questioning by practice is absent in TLC. This is not to suggest that TLC texts are

[54] As reported by Arun Kumar Sinha on 04/12/1994, a High School teacher, also a KRP for the TLC coordination work in Kathikund Block of Dumka.

totally irrelevant and should be discarded. Rather, TLC text and language is not 'sensitive to' and 'near to' the tribals' lived experience.

The important thing in any language-text for learning is that it should not only be a representation of an interaction, but should also provide an opportunity for real linguistic interaction to the learner. It is this opportunity which adult learners wished to avail when they joined in TLC - an opportunity to interact with and make sense of a written text. The TLC and school texts do not contain any reference to tribals. For the Santhal tribals, the chief planners and organisers of both the school and the TLC are outsiders. The way older and newer generations among tribals respond to these external initiatives (by outsiders) are quite often different. These initiatives are however seen by them not as of tribal benefit but to the advantage of the dominant society. This impression is heightened by the fact that adult learners are taught to decontextualise language. They are taught to learn alien words, phrases and patterns of speech through a written text. They begin to read and write what they do not know rather than what they know, hence a gap opens up in communication and cognitive learning in the use of written medium.

By establishing a gap between the learner's personal linguistic skills and the standard literacy norms, the entire approach to language learning hinders their capacity to interact with the texts used in these language lessons. The non-tribal primary and middle-school teachers who teach in these tribal areas, were reported to beat their students for speaking their language in schools. The teachers, as reported by the tribal chief, preach to tribal children supposedly literate values such as clear thinking, clean habits and keeping things in order. Though some of these instructions may be right, what is wrong is a pedagogy which reinforces the paternalistic ideology of dominant (mainstream) school culture. All these experiences, according to the village Chief, lead to, or reinforce, the existing 'gap' and alienation at various levels, between the standard literacy of the dominant community and the tribal community. Thus most tribal school children would generally pretend acceptance and silence, and eventually drop out from school sooner or later. So has been the case of adult learners earlier who have been found to regress finally after a short while. Though things have changed for the better, still political and bureaucratic forces have succeeded in creating and maintaining 'gaps' at various levels, i.e. between the educated and the non-educated tribals, between the younger generations and the older generations, between what is imposed and what they can learn. As such, all tribal experiences of reading and school practices, directly or indirectly, have fostered, maintained or reinforced the gaps that exist. The Bihar Hindi primer, both through its content and its language, does not allow

tribal learners to engage with the text, it only reinforces their silence, inferiority, fear, frustration, confusion and even anger. Denial of opportunity for interaction with the written text and language generates 'unlearning' on the part of learners due to confusion and anxiety created particularly by political meanings and identities represented in these texts.

So the Dumka official's and Patna SRC writer's idea of language learning and its promotion has proved futile for the tribal adult learners. This is for a number of reasons: i) the words of the TLC text do not form a part of the popular-common language in that area and hence are alien to the tribal people; ii) familiarizing themselves with these alien words becomes difficult also because of the decontextualised learning methods used in classrooms where no extra tools like photographs, illustrations and cards showing change in variations of different linguistic patterns, are used to explain the alphabet and the words[55]. It is true that many of the tribals want to learn Hindi, but it is equally true that many resist its imposition on them. It is also true that all of them have found it difficult to switch over quickly to standardised Hindi, as was required under the TLC. It was found that despite TLC guidelines to conduct a survey of people's opinions, attitudes, beliefs, linguistic stock and base line for learning, the district administration, without conducting any comprehensive survey, officially declared that the tribals wanted to learn the dominant language. The tribals were accordingly given primers written in Hindi. All the 47 adult learners and the two VTs including the village chief of Nawadih, emphatically denied that they were ever consulted by the district administration on the choice of language for the TLC operation. Whatever the wishes of the local people, there exists no concrete policy on language learning for the tribals. The difference between the home language and the language of formal learning and the lack of a strategy to link up the two have been the main causes of a regressive and fragile literacy achievement in general, and drop-out, wastage and stagnation in the school system

[55] Though there is no language in this world which is in its pristine state today, i.e. with all its words formed from its own resources, without any influence from other languages or dialects, the politics behind standardisation of Hindi which started early this century, and which continues in lesser degree even today, has made Hindi more a class dialect of upper-caste, educated Hindus rather than a popular medium of mass education and literacy. Krishna Kumar writes that the quest for self-identity in the region of north India which was led by upper-caste educated Hindus, 'influenced the organization of knowledge both at school and college levels in a key area of curriculum, namely the teaching of Hindi. ... But the class dialect that this literati carved out of the lingua franca of the region impeded the progress of elementary education and literacy. This by itself had implications for the shaping of politics in northern India.' He further writes, 'Once established, this identity was used from the late thirties onwards to fulfill a hegemonic political agenda. *This political use of Hindi speeded up its transformation from being a spoken language into becoming a narrow dialect of educational and political communication. This form of Hindi not only denied the Urdu heritage its share , but also closed itself vis-à-vis the powerful spoken varieties of the region including Awadhi, Bundeli, Chhatisgarhi, Bhojpuri and the several tribal languages of central India. ... In a society where literacy was very narrowly spread, this meant a very restricted sphere indeed.*' (emphasis added). See Krishna Kumar (1991), Political Agenda of Education , 17-18, 142

in particular. Such a gap in language use in the two spheres also has wider ramifications for the development of tribal identity, which we will return to later.

Speaking and reading as two distinct parts of language learning are distinguishing features of a 'written' culture where this distinction is more formalised than in an 'oral' culture. With ever-growing emphasis on formalised learning within compartmentalized disciplines of modern knowledge, language no longer remains merely a medium of communication. Instead, language becomes a method of control and occlusion on the part of dominant languages. More generally, this leads to a pattern of 'incommunication' due to various social divisions created by linguistic practices. Less developed local languages or dialects, such as Santhali, Ho, Bhojpuri, etc., are treated by dominant languages as colloquial and vulgar, as opposed to standardised and more literate languages like Sanskritised Hindi, Bhadralok Bengali, Cuttacki Oriya, Oxbridge English, etc.. As Ivan Illich has put it, 'Not only have many mother tongues become extinct or are on the way to extinction, but the entire social fabric stands threatened by the demands of large scale printing, uniform and universal schooling and standard language. All these promise modernization and higher educational opportunity, but destroy the resilience of culturally autonomous groups and individuals'[56]. Usually this starts with an attitude of 'indifference, avoidance or disparagement' on the part of the more literate speakers, particularly dominant language speakers, towards the less literate and minority languages. Formal and stigmatized distinctions among speakers of various languages reinforce hierarchical arrangements of group identity. In this context language learning no longer remains simply a question of form but a hierarchical organisation of people in terms of linguistic inequality.

At no stage were the tribals in Dumka seen to engage in discussion and dialogue with the organisers, particularly the higher officials. The main reason was that these officials hardly encouraged them to speak, reason and discuss in their own language[57]. If tribals wanted to speak at all, they were asked to say something from their primers. Obviously, their poor proficiency in the given language discouraged them and usually forced them to remain silent. Most meetings and gatherings of tribal people (even when the Governor of Bihar, A.R. Kidwai, addressed a gathering of tribal adult learners on 30 November, 1994) were seen to be dominated by slogans, communiqués, monologues and instruction. None among the tribal learners was allowed to speak his or her views. All official speeches on this

[56] Ivan Illich in D. P. Pattanayak (1981), Multilingualism And Mother-Tongue Education , xi

[57] These are mainly field observations. But for similar observations see, Sadhna Saxena (1993), 'Limits and Consequences of Literacy Programme', EPW, February 20-27

day were marked by a superficial concern with the cause of literacy and empowerment. The creation of a good learning environment for the adult learners depends on the expressive and psychological needs rather than on instruction and monologues. It is often difficult for the tribals to accept and believe the district officials and the non-tribal educators, even if their ideas are new and genuinely helpful. They have reached such a level of suspicion and distrust that their first reaction is indifference and/or resistance. In a situation of mutual suspicion, it is primarily the responsibility of the educators and the officials to remove that suspicion by allowing tribal learners to speak their minds. This kind of open attitude might slowly make them feel freer to express themselves and also to accept new ideas. Their incoherence and mistakes have to be patiently tolerated, they should not be abused or mocked and used if these efforts are to form a basis for further learning.

Tribal adult learners, particularly women learners, often said in interviews that they were 'always in fear of speaking either the wrong thing or incorrectly', meaning thereby that they were neither supported in their speech articulation nor were they encouraged to speak. They needed a supportive climate in order to risk being vocal. This requires empathy as well as new skills on the part of educators and officials. Such supportive attitudes, skills and strategies have been tried and found to be successful in Banda district in Uttar Pradesh, Dungarpur district in Rajasthan and Pudukkottai in Tamilnadu (India)[58]. In these places, the educators limited their role mainly to helping, supporting and unveiling the vague thoughts of their learners, rather than giving them lectures or instructional training. According to some of these voluntary adult educators, adult education cannot be a monologic instruction[59]. The educators' role lies mainly in understanding group dynamics, and in the creation of a good learning environment which can build on contributions made by its members. These participative features of language learning methodology were nowhere visible in TLC operation in any of the six districts we visited in Bihar and Haryana. Thus after a certain stage, the adult learners find language learning a 'boring job' because it involves a joyless activity based on the additive or linear acquisition of the alphabet, words and sentence making. Language learning through interesting stories, poetry or folk songs, reconstructed for their individual and group interest, might have been more easily internalised by the adult learners. Traditional practices, whose diffusion has held diverse

[58] see Renuka Mishra, et.al., (1994) 'Concretizing Concepts: Continuing Education Strategies For Women', Convergence, Vol. XXVII, No. 2/3, 126-134

[59] ibid.

Indian communities together over a long period, have to be reworked into deliberate cultural policies of the government if such initiatives are to be successful.

3.2 ACHIEVEMENT: COMMITMENT, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND IDENTITY

Changes in consciousness, both at individual and social levels, are very difficult to assess, especially the role of literacy as an instrument in this change. Still, the TLC group-culture can be linked in a holistic way to broad patterns of the adult learner's lives in order to understand these changes. The TLC group-culture can be seen as a part of the general public culture. With a more 'focused' look at the particular aspects of TLC group interaction and utterances of individuals, we can study the changes in the learner's consciousness. By focusing on their language of interaction, and the processes and nature of TLC participation, we can understand the qualitative outcomes of literacy. One key to understanding the qualitative outcome of literacy is the change in the identity perceptions of the learners.

The TLC was supposed to confer a new status on the learners as co-partners in community education and national development and as members of a vigilant national public. This was to be achieved by improving their thought-structure, raising their literacy levels, enhancing their self-image and getting rid of their ignorance and sense of inferiority[60]. As we saw in Dumka, even within the boundaries of primer-based classroom teaching, none of the learners were confident in writing and reading words from their primers, though otherwise they were able to converse freely. Outside primer teaching, the TLC does not involve any structured discussion sessions or creative writing activities. Both schools and literacy programmes in Bihar at the lower levels suffer from this inactivity. For the Biharis, including the tribals who take a far more reverential attitude rather than a purely instrumental and utilitarian attitude towards education (as is typical in Haryana), the standards in both literacy campaigns and other formal educational institutions have deteriorated over time.

The concept of 'total literacy' offered people a unifying ideal not only for mobilising and rallying together towards 100% literacy in the 3Rs, but also for institutionalizing the processes of democracy and the creation of a learning society. Such a unifying ideal, coupled with other strategies, did allow TLC to draw a huge number of volunteers and adult learners in some pockets of Bihar such as Dumka, Dhanbad, Madhubani and Madhepura districts. In other districts, which practised it purely as a 'top-down' government package, it met a poor response from the local public. For example, the reason behind the rallying and

[60] Report of The Committee For Review of National Policy On Education 1986, Part - I, December 26 (1990), 193-194

unifying spirit in the Dumka TLC was the bureaucracy's openness, commitment and encouragement to people, personified in two individuals, the Deputy Commissioner and the Programme Officer. In Dhanbad, the content of the literacy primers highlighting local experiences and local volunteers' ability to forge links with people's problems, such as illegal extortion in coal mines, illegal home-made liquor sales, pollution, equal wage etc., were the main reasons behind its drawing power. In Madhubani and Madhepura, the main reason facilitating the campaign process was the focus on social problems of caste and gender divisions within society[61]. Because of these strategies, tribals in Dumka, thousands of daily wage-earning workers in the unorganised sector of Dhanbad coal mines, and women and low-caste people in Madhubani and Madhepura, slowly joined in the literacy campaign in their districts. The main significance of TLC in Bihar, wherever it has been successful, may be seen less in terms of achievement in the 3Rs as compared to Haryana (where organisational voluntarism and instrumental/utilitarian uses of 3Rs constitute the main signs of success), and more in terms of processes which have helped individuals with skills in oral speech, larger organisational and mobilisational skills in group participation, consciousness of public vigilance, decentralisation, equal participation, gender and caste equality and basic human rights.

In India, according to Denzil Saldanha, 'the national level data suggests that states that have had a history of social reform movements, peasant organisation and working class struggles, such as Kerela and West Bengal' are more successful in 'contrast to the performance of urban metropolises' and 'regions within the northern Hindi belt and in tribal areas that have a problematic response' to the literacy campaigns[62]. However, in discussing the 'problematic response' to literacy campaigns in the Hindi belt, Saldanha focuses only on macro-level structural problems of the larger community but fails to discern its main micro-level causes and dynamics. Saldanha traces the failure of the literacy campaign in the Hindi region to the problem of 'caste, the status of women and "semi-feudal" relations in agriculture'[63]. He misses the point that it is primarily the narrow preoccupation and debilitating practices of TLC rather than feudal relations in society which have negated these efforts in the Hindi region. Saldanha partially realizes that 'in the tribal regions, a

[61] These observations were confirmed in personal discussions with main district level TLC organisers who when asked what according to them were the 'pulling' strategy for drawing people into TLC. Initially, all of them faced the challenge of people's cynical attitude towards government sponsored initiatives, and hence they had to circumvent this attitude through a mass appeal of their most pressing/glaring problem.
[62] Denzil Saldanha (1995), 'Literacy Campaigns in Maharashtra and Goa - Issues, Trends and Direction' in EPW Vol. XXX, No. 20, 1172-1196
[63] ibid.

relatively homogeneous ethnic identity can facilitate or militate against the campaign approach depending on sensitivity to cultural identity based on orality and to pressing economic issues that might have taken political forms of expression'[64]. Saldanha's analysis seems to be logical as far as his broad and general understanding of macro level societal factors influencing 'literacy' and 'illiteracy' are concerned. About the micro-level successes or failures of TLC his judgement seems to be influenced by official over-statement and thus appear highly exaggerated and misplaced. For example, he writes that 'the campaigns have succeeded in temporarily organising a minority of the literate towards the literacy of the majority' and that 'the campaigns have brought them in closer contact with the people within a broader concept of shared citizenship'[65]. Shared citizenship involves a much stronger sense of the 'individual' participating as a member of a national public, having a sense of political equality with other citizens, particularly vis-à-vis the powerful bureaucrats. Saldanha neither defines his concept of citizenship nor gives any example of when and how individual adult learners have come to acquire such a sense of 'shared citizenship'. Our field study suggests a different conclusion. Here, as an example, is a statement from the village chief of Nawadih on the experience of adult learners of his village. This is the gist of what he said:

> 'Literacy, of course, *aam taur par* (popularly) means reading and writing. But how does it make sense if I am not able to convey my point to you. That means, you should develop some '*buddhi*' (understanding) also, so that you are able to talk, so that nobody cheats you. If you do not know a language, you can't speak and people will use you. *Dikus* cheat us because we can't properly speak their language. And how can we? They don't speak our language but we have to speak theirs. So are these *sahebs*. How can we persuade them to give us what we want? They just want us, at times, to learn and do something. We cooperate if it helps us. When we don't cooperate, they say, *'ajib moorakh hai'* (what a fool). They say - we are bad, foolish, backward, have no '*buddhi*' (understanding), no '*dimag*' (mind). This is what is also written in these books (primers). They will finally say, we don't learn anything, we don't know anything, still doubt the intentions of these officers. But the reality is that they are '*beimaan*' (dishonest). They can't explain when we ask for something in their offices, still they want to teach us the 3Rs. What can they teach us? How much they are interested, God knows. ... (TLC) ... will slowly have problems ... he won't go, she won't go, and slowly, after sometime, everybody will stop going. They don't care for us; still they will lecture...'[66]

There is here a clear appreciation of the relation between language learning and social relations, in terms of 'we' and 'they'. It is, however, difficult to isolate instances of

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[64] ibid.
[65] ibid.
[66] Nawadih village Chief on 11/12/1994. The village Chief uttered a long statement with many repetitve things - a common characteristic of oral grous. Here we are giving only the significant aspects of his utterances.

heightened consciousness equally and individually for each member's experience, particularly in the case of the younger generation of tribals. Tribal experiences with district officials and '*Dikus*' either at a TLC meeting or elsewhere in public places vary greatly. Their experience is affected by various individual meanings and interpretations in both personal and social relations. They are affected by both conscious and unconscious acts of individuals concerned, and mediated through an overarching influence of history. A few of the adult tribals, particularly old ones like the village Chief, had never been to school. In their case, survival needs took precedence over schooling. Some among the older generation have had unfortunate experiences as students in schools and so they hardly believe that education or literacy learning will have any useful meaning in their lives, or even those of their children. There have been many occasions when students have been punished for speaking Santhali inside the school premises. Even adult tribals of the younger generation have similar experiences of being treated badly by government officials and school teachers. Tribal ability or inability to converse and influence government officials and not-tribal school teachers have had different outcomes in the past, though in most cases unpleasant. The point here is that tribal relation with non-tribal communities, particularly with government officers, may not always have a predictable pattern particularly in situations where younger tribals see themselves in transition, as an 'emerging' and socially mobile group. Younger generation tribals are more willing to adopt mainstream values but they do so on their own terms. Thus, the tribal community is becoming internally more heterogeneous and more dynamic than what government officials or the dominant community assume.

The younger Santhals see themselves as an 'emergent' community as can be seen in the discourse of the Jharkhand movement and the social mobility observed among educated sections who adopt mainstream life-styles. Hence, any fixed or deterministic cultural notion of relations between two (tribal and non-tribal) communities can undermine sensitive working relations between them. The dominant (official and academic) notion about Santhali culture holds that they are generally a backward and primitive community. But such a notion cannot account for the element of flux and heterogeneity which Santhals as a community exhibit. For example, isolating their traditional learning styles, (i.e. multi-purpose tribal youth dormitories where training in various social skills and occupational training in community living were provided)[67] and determining how they may have

[67] Sita Toppo (1979), Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribal India , 282-285. Here Sita mentions about traditional youth dormitories for boys and girls which have existed since generations among the Oraons

influenced Santhali perceptions of the 3Rs, can lead to a failure to consider other learning styles that are associated in many meaningful ways with modern developments in culture and contact with the *Dikus*. The complex dynamics of Santhali community identity under these transitional conditions may or may not always clearly show a single pattern of behaviour towards dominant non-tribal institutions. This is not to say that Santhals have no culture or identity of their own, nor that they are like everybody else in the pan-Bihari identity. They are still visibly culturally distinct from the rest of the non-tribal world. To consider them similar like other peasant communities, is a big mistake often characteristic of district officials. The Santhals are assumed to be no different from the rural non-tribal Biharis (i.e. mainstream landless peasantry and workers) in their use and knowledge of standard Hindi and other forms of knowledge. Santhals, like other rural Biharis, are extremely poor and 'illiterate'. So they are treated by officials in terms of 'what they do not have', never in terms of 'what they have' as a socio-linguistic community of aspiring persons, so that they could be empowered with the help of their cultural base, with things which they consider as their own and from which they could start to learn. To assume that Santhals, or even Scheduled Caste Harijans (the 'Untouchables' of Hindu community) are no different from the mainstream underprivileged groups, is to overlook the ways in which these completely marginalised communities accommodate and resist other cultural and educational influences.

Santhals and other tribals in Bihar as a whole must be seen as emergent (fast changing and transitional) communities. The culture of tribals in the Chotanagpur region is not homogeneous, rather it is heterogeneous and pluralistic. Response to any state initiative must therefore be seen in terms of individual and group dynamics of each different person, community or village . The story of Birsa Munda (a famous tribal leader of Ranchi district), as described in the Bihar TLC Primer (Part III), was found to be at odds with the perception of the Santhals of Dumka. They saw Birsa's attitude towards both British and the non-tribals (as well as fellow community men and women) and his cultural and religious attachment to both the Hindus and the Christian missionaries quite differently. Yet the Santhali adult learners read all the three TLC Primers. They did not reject these texts as completely false representations but tried to come to terms with it as something negotiable. What was at odds with tribal learner's experience was that TLC Primers treated all tribals as homogeneous, fixed in time and place. By not including Santhali words and forms of speech, not a single

(tribals) of Ranchi district. Such traditional dormitories were also reported (during our field-work) to exist in Dumka district; they performed similar functions in learning and training in community living.

word about Santhali culture and its achievement, nor a story about Siddho, Kanho, whom Santhals consider their leader, TLC officials, in an implicit way, had treated the Santhals and their attributes as unworthy of inclusion in an official text like TLC primer. The SRC (State Resource Centre, Patna) member, who (must have) suggested that the Birsa Munda story be included in the TLC Primer as a lesson, as representing tribal values, was not, as Santhals believed, representative of the entire tribal community.

Our fieldstudy discussion with the Santhals about their life and diversity gives us a different understanding. It is different from the experiences of SRC members, Dumka district officials as well as the academic analyses of Denzil Saldanha, who has worked among the tribals of Thane district in Maharashtra. The adult learners have the highest communicative bond with TLC's day-to-day activities, and with the local volunteers, but this decreased in terms of involvement, attachment and communication with the TLC texts, and decreased further when it came into contact with the senior district officials. In the day-to-day activities, learners interact with representatives from their own community (i.e. the VTs) who act as visible mediators of communication. But in case of interaction with the TLC text, there is no visible narrator, or a first person speaker. The learners do not see any name connected with the written words of these primers except in a few stories. Hence, the adult learners generally cannot identify with the speaker or writer of the text. This sort of 'impersonal' situation or context of message is unfamiliar to them in their own culture and speech-norms. They cannot relate themselves with formal explanations or technical facts, or things which are impersonally presented. In such 'structuralist-essayist' texts like the TLC primers, the learners cannot comprehend easily the contextual 'meaning' in a statement which is presented as an autonomous impersonal text. Secondly, the content and direction of these textual narratives represent a monologic appreciation of discursive features and intentions which are valued by the mainstream culture or the dominant community. Such monologic stories are seen not only to be authoritarian but also as distorted representations of the lives of tribal and illiterate people, calling for a blind and assimilative interaction.

Under the TLC, the tribal adult learners are required to 'participate' in particular ways laid down by officials. They are encouraged to accept what is said to them rather than what they think and understand. The TLC text is presented as complete, something self-contained, a thing to be internalised rather than to be interacted with. The TLC's pedagogic practices thus reinforce the tribals' past experiences in other spheres. Thus, far from making adult learners partners in a shared citizenship based on equal identity relations, as Denzil Saldanha suggests, the TLC seems to be re-enforcing the gap between communities.

Secondly, government officials have always tried to confuse the mobilisation of state resources with the mobilisation of people. The two are obviously different. People joined in TLCs because they were given hope. Some joined because of the pressure from local influential elites and out of false expectations of employment and other material benefits. It is wrong to equate people's initial willingness and physical involvement with an institutionalised social practice. Even within the short span of TLC group activity it would be difficult to conclude that they learnt some long-lasting modern organisational and discursive skills. The basic breakthrough which any initiative requires consists in allowing people to have a sense of ownership of the programme itself. Until now, their involvement has been passive and often like a guided tour. Thirdly, local officials always had the chance of institutionalising democratic participation but never wished to do so. The Indian Constitution provides that all citizens are equal, but the bureaucracy still continues to indulge itself in colonial attitudes, either through acts of benevolence (as in the case of Dumka) or arrogance (as in the case of Rohtak, Haryana) but both in an equally elitist manner. In Dumka, when the DC visits a tribal village, people feel happy because they still consider him a 'sovereign', a 'god-like' person, whereas the DC treats the tribal adult learners like 'a new born baby' who 'cannot be fed with an adult diet'[68].

Though there have been marginal and momentary successes for the TLC in a few pockets of Bihar which could be attributed to particular strategies based on social issues, the point being made here is that the TLC, with its narrowly conceptualised preoccupation and half-heartedly enforced implementation, does not and can not institutionalise its professed democratic goals and the principles of a modern civil society. At best, as history of adult education in Bihar shows, it has 'made tremendous strides' whenever charismatic and committed leaders or officials identified themselves with the programme and took a personal interest with a few selective strategies, but it has also failed because of a lack of a micro-level perspective and stringent regulations[69]. The question that arises is: should the progress of adult education be left to individual commitment as in case of Dumka, or some singular strategies as in case of Madhubani, Dhanbad and Madhepura? This incompleteness leaves adult learners with an unfinished journey in a fragile literacy culminating in 'volunteer fatigue', cynicism and isolation. Isn't it desirable that committed officials should try to develop a multi-layered local leadership and expertise, and institutionalise a literacy

[68] This was evident from the utterances of tribals. The latter statement came from the DC of Dumka in answer to a written questionnaire (dated 15.4.1995)
[69] Shah, op.cit., 67-68

practice which is self-sustaining?[70] The government, in its own legislative capacity, will have to bring in legislative reform providing for strict regulation and implementation of its schemes. It must, first, stipulate a change in the way the bureaucracy works, and then, provide a comprehensive conceptualisation, prioritizing its main concerns in clear terms. Otherwise, its concern for mass education and mass literacy will remain unfulfilled. These problems have also been noted by the government in reviewing its past experiences. The government accepts that adult education programmes have earlier failed for the following reasons:

> (a) they are 'not perceived as a felt need'; (b) adult literacy has not been 'placed within a wider social context. The whole gamut of the development needs of the adult - of survival, employment, health, etc. - are not addressed. There is failure to realise that illiteracy is but a form of marginalisation or exclusion of those who are unable to secure for themselves minimum standards of well-being'; and (c) it has been generally 'viewed more in the context of teaching methods and of learning to read and write' rather than as above (a) and (b)[71].

Even though the government is self-critical, the new strategies adopted (as in TLC) are shy of addressing these problems seriously because of vested local interests. In collusion with the dominant local groups (landlords, moneylenders, politicians), the government officials dominate the local tribal people and unless there is some stringent regulation for successful participation and institutionalization of public accountability, the local organisations as well as people are going to be dominated by these entrenched interests. The government has only two options for positive intervention. One is to provide all the necessary vocational and employment opportunities for the entire target group along with facilities for literacy training to support it. But it is unlikely to do so for lack of resources. The other option is to build on local resources by having stringent provisions for people's participation and to allow local people to discuss, organise and create their own programme of literacy. This is a feasible strategy but it requires strict regulatory laws and community coordination, and this is the point at which the government balks. In order to make these programmes work, it would have to restructure its own machinery.

Though there now exists a government policy on adult education, it does not yet cater to an institutionalized practice of the values it formally acknowledges. There are structural impediments to a fully successful operation of TLC. The government has not provided autonomous space and power to those new structures which would carry out these goals. Instead, it has vested these additional responsibilities to the existing structures i.e. the

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[70] ibid. Also see Report of the Expert Group - 1994 , 29-31. See sections 6.14 (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v)

[71] Report of The Committee For Review of National Policy On Education 1986, Part - I (1990), 196

bureaucracy. One is not arguing here against national level planning or policies. We can agree with the need to have a broad national policy perspective for educational and literacy planning, but only on the condition that the specific needs of regions and groups, are given sufficient attention. What is more important for operational success is that, in a vast and diverse country with limited resources such as India, policies and programmes must be able to decentralize the powers of intervention. It must devolve to local bodies issues that might be better taken up by the local people. For example, as TLC provides for a separate, 'independent and autonomous' body at the district level called the Zila Saksharata Samiti (ZSS) all sections of the local community should be given 'representation in the planning and implementation of programmes' (see Appendix 1, section 2). But in practice the real and main powers remain in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner and the TLC officials in Patna and Delhi. In Dumka, district officials did not train or even encourage the functionaries (particularly the VTs , MTs and adult learners) to innovate their own methods or use their own plans. In this regard, the Report of the Expert Group (1994) appointed by the Government of India to evaluate the TLC is highly pertinent. It observed that 'there is increasing bureaucratisation of the very approach to TLCs. That is to say, the people-oriented approach is tending to be replaced by bureaucrats alone, both with respect to project formulation and with respect to implementation'[72]. The Expert Group has also specifically noted that this malaise is widely prevalent in the Hindi-speaking states.

The government is interested only in applauding its own quantitative success and this has fostered an administrative culture of prioritizing book keeping. Such practices have only encouraged the state and district level officials to fudge these records. Reliance on updated and quantified reports has now become a matter of habit with the bureaucracy. Due to this complacent attitude, the lower staff at the bottom of state level bureaucracy, confessed that 'we have a helpless habit now of fudging these records'[73]. Ultimately, government projects result in total failure in absolute terms, which means a tragic waste of time, energy and effort for the bureaucracy and of course of money from the public exchequer. However, this does not affect the higher bureaucracy, because according to it, record maintenance and statistical production of figures is not a waste of time but a ritual of prime importance. It has a quantitative thrust which necessarily counters genuine democratic participation in the production, validation and evaluation of modern state initiatives.

[72] Report of the Expert Group- 1994 , Section 6.14(iv), 30

[73] Informal discussion with a ZSS staff in Dumka (name withheld) on 30.11.1994. Similar feelings were expressed by various other junior government officials in Dumka and Patna during our field visit.

Chapter 5

Literacy Development in Haryana

Part One : History of Educational Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Haryana offers an interesting comparison with Bihar. It is also a Hindi-speaking state, backward culturally and educationally, but it has lately become economically one of the richest states in India. 'Affluence in Haryana', we are told, 'conceals more than it reveals'[1]. It also appeared from our field-study that economic development in the state did not bring much change in other spheres such as education, public institutions, the arts and general culture. Haryana remains, statistically, very poor in terms of the general quality of literacy, the quality of educational achievement, 'provision of social consumption goods', mortality rates and other demographic indicators of welfare; paradoxically, its 'performance has been among the worst in the country'[2]. We have chosen Haryana as our second case study of Hindi-speaking states for a comparative analysis of TLC for three main reasons. Firstly, to find out what is the state of literacy achievement in general and to consider how TLC practices work in particular in a state which is economically developing very fast. Secondly, to ascertain how far Haryana is, educationally and culturally different from poor Hindi-speaking states like Bihar. And thirdly, to see how far economic development guarantees development in other spheres such as education and public culture. To understand these developments particularly in relation to TLC, we will first have a history of education and literacy development in Haryana. Since many aspects of development in the last two centuries, in the Hindi-speaking states are similar, we will concentrate mainly on features which are different from Bihar.

2. DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE 1966

Haryana, a tiny north-western state bordering the imperial-metropolitan capital city of Delhi consists of an area of 44,000 square kilometers, with a population (1991 Census) of less than 16.5 million, of which about 78% is rural. There are more than 6000 villages which are all mainly agrarian. It was separated from Punjab on 1 November 1966. Before

[1] Interview with Dr. Jitendra Prasad (20/2/95), Reader in Sociology, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak
[2] Sheila Bhalla (1995), 'Development, Poverty and Policy - The Haryana Experience', EPW, Vol. XXX, Nos. 41 and 42, 2619-2634

that, particularly during the colonial period it was a part of either United Province or United Punjab and it had no separate political identity of its own as an administrative region. Historically, 'Haryana had been and continues to be but one part of the wider cultural and linguistic region embracing Delhi, United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) and Rajasthan'[3]. Before British Annexation (which was completed in 1849) it consisted of small, native princely states, some under the control of distant rulers like the Marathas and Sikhs. Although always politically torn by invasions, internal feuds and civil wars, this region too had preserved and enriched its traditional educational endowments until it was nearly destroyed by the new administrative and educational system introduced by the British after annexation. 'There was not a single mosque, or temple or dharamshala in this region which did not have at least one learning centre of the traditional type attached to it, to which the youth generally flocked chiefly for vocational training in the 3R's and for religious moral education'[4]. This education was not compulsory or highly organised on a formal basis, but was very popular. Ordinary people found it cheap, within easy reach and flexibly well-suited to the requirements of farm and seasonal labour.

The Punjab Administration Reports of 1854-55 and 1855-56 recognised the existence of these traditional schools. It was noted that the 'style of education' in these schools was 'primitive', still 'the majority of people, though ignorant, are yet not insensible to the blessings of knowledge of their children'[5]. The natives had not yet developed a modern and secular system of teaching and learning, particularly of science education. Their traditional reverence for learning and knowledge was quite deep-seated. The first two stages (i.e. elementary and secondary stages) of indigenous learning were directed at mundane and secular aspects of occupational, social and cultural transactions. The main patrons were the wealthy of each village, and with the help of their generous contributions, schools were run by Maulvis and Pandits who stayed there and taught students in an informal and intimate way. Many teachers and fakirs who enjoyed good reputations and had acquired wealth, maintained their own schools, but in most cases the students collected donations and contributions from ordinary villagers, usually a part of their produce. Much higher learning, for example, the study of lexicology, rhetoric, medicine, astrology and astronomy along with literary studies of epics, poetics, hymns and

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[3] S.P. Shukla (1985), India's Freedom Struggle and the Role of Haryana, 18-19.

[4] see Introduction in G.W. Leitner (1882), History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab since Annexation and in 1882, (reprinted 1991). There are altogether five parts in Leitner's book, each paginated separately. Here we refer mainly to its first part unless otherwise stated.

[5] quoted in H.R. Mehta (1929), A History of the Growth and Development of Western Education in the Punjab 1846-1884, (reprinted 1971), 32-33

philosophy was based mainly on oral practices. Persian had been the main language of learning for some centuries among the aristocracies of Punjab and other northern and central parts of India, particularly among the Muslims. The existing bilingual tradition among the learned people of the region allowed Persian to exert a great beneficial influence on various vernaculars like *Khari-boli* along with Arabic and Sanskrit[6]. According to G.W. Leitner, Urdu of common people's language became a subject of study first for Europeans and later for the natives, 'to whom it was said to come incidentally through Persian'[7]. Replacement of Persian by Urdu was looked upon as a limitation in education by the upper class Muslim gentry and it led its gradual disuse as a spoken and written language.

However, though slowly, Urdu, and finally English, was to replace existing popular vernacular education as 'an avenue and claim to employment under Government' by the more clever and intelligent sections in the community, as G.W. Leitner observed that time '... in spite of persecution, indigenous education is still endowed with some vitality, and that it, practically, represents the protest of the people against our system of education'[8]. There were a few thousand secular schools both for elementary instruction and higher learning in this region, which were well attended by Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus[9]. The elementary instruction in these schools consisted of commercial ciphering and ledger-keeping (mostly in Mahajani, Chatsals or Baniya schools) along with reading and writing, mental arithmetic and grammar. There were altogether 557 indigenous schools with 7,100 pupils in the Haryana region proper, as against 13,109 indigenous schools with 133,588 pupils in the whole of Punjab at the end of 19th century[10]. In the Haryana region these indigenous schools included the Mahajani schools, the Maktabs and Madrasas, the Sanskrit and Nagri Pathshalas which maintained a spirit of reverence for learning for its own sake and for the development of individual character and religious culture.

However, it appears that in the area of indigenous learning, the districts of Delhi and Hissar division, which comprised much of contemporary Haryana, were 'among the least educated in the whole province of Panjab' and in fact there the indigenous schools were '*below* the average of the better schools'[11]. Quality apart, there were substantially fewer indigenous schools in the Haryana region, probably because the majority of the

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[6] Leitner, op.cit., ii
[7] ibid.
[8] op.cit., ii and 14
[9] op.cit., i
[10] ibid.
[11] op.cit., 47 (Part I). For Delhi and Hissar Division, see Part - II, 1-26. The then Delhi Division included districts of Delhi, Gurgaon, Karnal and Hissar Division included districts of Hissar, Rohtak, and Sirsa

population there was engaged in subsistence farming. The rich, uneducated farmers belonging to Jat and Gujjar communities maintained their dominance in lower Punjab (Haryana region) without bothering themselves with education and literacy. Education was a matter of social and occupational interest for the small community of Brahmins, the upper class of Muslim gentry, the scribe castes, and the Baniyas who lived in upper Punjab where they have been the traditional patrons of learning. The local Jats and Gujjars did not concern themselves with the growth of education until the 1920s and 30s, when inter-caste competition for political supremacy under the new administration led them to open new colleges and institutions.

In the Punjab region which included modern Haryana and Delhi, modern education introduced by the British during second half of 19th century and early 20th century was not very popular. It was popular only with traditional patrons of learning. It became more popular with trading communities who, though oppressed and despised, were clever enough to foresee the trend of historical change. For them, the English rule and system of education came as a boon. With the rest of the community, as we have seen, it remained unwelcome for a long time. As G.W. Leitner, the then Principal of Lahore College in Punjab writes, even the government remained reluctant to open new schools for them either based on the traditional or the modern system. When the first Educational Cess was levied on the local people for raising funds for Aided schools in their area, it met an enthusiastic response from the people. Later, to their disappointment, despite their contributions, the district officials did not help them open such schools for fear of wasting government money. At some places in the then north-west frontier, there followed public agitation in local communities where physical suppression by military troops was reported to have been used to diffuse protests, at the refusal of demands for schools[12].

On the whole, the majority of the population in Haryana continued to remain dependent on the subsistence economy of agriculture and animal husbandry. To participate in such a subsistence economy, they did not require literacy or education. Later some hope for the physically rough and tough inhabitants of this area came from the imperial administration when this region became a major recruiting area for the lower ranks of the British Indian army. Every village is said to have had at least one or two junior officers in the Defence Services and there are many popular stories and jokes about a *fauzi* (soldier) attitude and culture which seems to have contributed something to village identity in

[12] Leitner, op.cit., see Introduction

Haryana[13]. This contribution has added to their sense of serving the country in a way that demands strength, courage and commitment. Apart from this 'patriotic' identity, Haryana has also maintained a strong sense of rural identity where traditional solidarity has been jealously guarded against external infringements. English and modern education appeared to be in bad taste to the natives, particularly among the rural peasantry. Against the offensive parade of the English-educated native elites, there grew among the peasantry a defensive identity based on rural culture. This identity, born out of an instinct for cultural self-preservation, grew stronger with time opposing not only official ridicule but also the rising influence of the new English-educated elites coming from other regions who were unmindful of the interests of the local majority culture.

The attitude of the British administration was ambivalent about both Oriental and English education. On the one hand, they feared that Oriental education would diminish the demand for English education, yet on the other, they feared that the spread of English education would lead to unemployment and hence growing discontent. Both these fears proved to be unfounded as, for example, the establishment of Lahore College, which also permitted Oriental education, did not diminish the demand for English education[14]. The government was, however reluctant not only to re-invigorate the old indigenous schools, but also to open new schools. Hence, as the old indigenous schools started dying out, English or modern education hardly made any headway into these hinterlands of Haryana[15]. Four English schools were opened in Sonepat Pargana by a British officer between 1816-1823 but later they were closed owing to lack of financial support[16]. A few Tehsildari (Zamindari) schools were also opened in some of the districts under the 'grant-in-aid' system but they were essentially town-based and mainly in upper Punjab, not in the Haryana region.

The work done by the Arya Samaj in furthering the cause of indigenous education in Haryana, particularly in rural areas was of a mixed character. According to Prem Chowdhry, 'evidence suggests that the Arya Samaj efforts in the colonial period remained confined to the Punjab side and could not be seen in the Haryana region'[17]. The Arya Samajists were successful only in the upper Punjab region where disaffected Hindus felt threatened by the increasing influence of Christian missionaries. Also, the Arya Samaj had

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[13] Rajbir Deswal (1991), Wit and Humour of Haryana, 59, 122-27
[14] Leitner, op.cit.
[15] Mehta, op.cit., 52-53
[16] H. Sharp (1920), Selections from Educational records, Vol. I , (reprinted 1965) 13-15
[17] Prem Chowdhry (1994), The Veiled Women - Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana 1880-1990, 209

drawn its leadership and cadres from 'the ritually high castes, the trading and mercantile community of Punjab' and hence it could hardly find any support among the Haryana peasantry dominated by Jats[18]. Patriarchal and conservative as it was, the Jat community was averse to the reformist agenda of the Arya Samaj leadership, which, for example, propagated the idea that widows should be allowed to remarry and that both women and lower castes should have access to public services and education. The Jat community, which held political and social leadership in this region, became apprehensive that Arya Samaj's re-Sanskritising efforts might interfere with the slow vernacularisation process of the day, with disturbing consequences for their own power and dominance. The Jats were apprehensive of both the English educated elites and the reformist Arya Samaj leaders. Prem Chowdhry writes that 'the imagined role of a "modern woman", modelled upon the Victorian ideal of womanhood which influenced most Indian educationists of the nineteenth century, as companion and helpmate of the Punjabi urban educated male, with its emphasis on "good breeding" and "good manners", had no takers in Haryana'[19]. The Haryana region, with its extreme poverty, could hardly appreciate the rhetoric of these liberal and reformist agendas. There were no English medium schools, only a few Government and Aided schools. With indigenous schools declining fast, the additional efforts of the *Gurukul Shakhas* under Arya Samaj ended up with little success[20].

Social and occupational mobility in Haryana remained low until recently. The total number of Haryanavis in modern professions and business remained negligible, and their share continued to be low even under the Punjab state government of post-independent India, which, through an office order of 5th September 1958, had made it difficult for Haryanavis to get a government job, as knowledge of the Punjabi language was made a compulsory criterion for eligibility. Literacy in the Haryana region was as low as 15.76% for males and 2.98% for females at the time of Independence. Even after Independence, until Haryana's separation in 1966 the Punjab state government did little for educational development in this area as most resources were allocated to the upper Punjab region. For example, in the year 1963-64 Haryana received only Rs. 483.29 lakhs (32.8%) for developing education, much of which remained unutilised, whereas Punjab was allocated Rs. 765.74 lakhs (52%) out of the total budget[21]. After Independence, literacy and educational provisions became political issues as budgetary priorities were manipulated by

[18] ibid.
[19] Chowdhry, op.cit., 210
[20] ibid., also Leitner, op.cit.
[21] These figures are quoted in Prem Chowdhry, op.cit., 212-213

pressure groups of rich communities in the developed districts of upper Punjab. Haryana even today remains educationally backward though it has made great economic strides in recent decades.

3. THE ECONOMIC STRIDES AND BYPASSING OF EDUCATION (1966-94)

In last two decades, after its formation in 1966, Haryana has been undergoing rapid urbanisation. It has seen a growth in its urban population from 21.57% in 1981 to 43.07% in 1991. Much of the urbanisation reflects a growth in small and medium size markets and a few industrial towns, which have added to the numerical rise in literacy rates. Haryana, nevertheless, is primarily rural with over 6000 villages which are educationally poor. Delhi is the growing metropolitan, capital city which provides security and infrastructural facilities for industry, and is nearly surrounded by Haryana. This provides Haryana's eastern border with an enormously developing multinational industrial complex located between Chandigarh-Ambala-Delhi-Faridabad city centres. During the 1970s and the 1980s, a large number of private multinational companies established themselves in this area[22]. The Faridabad industries, with investments from a dozen big multinational companies, alone are reported to contribute more than half of the Haryana state's total revenue[23]. The income from these industries has helped Haryana to redress the rural imbalance with wide provision of electricity and roads. As a result, a small tertiary sector has developed in rural and semi-urban areas which are supplemented by a well-knit transport system, communications, banking and other branches of administration. The resulting diversification of the tertiary sector, mostly in semi-urban areas, has substantially reduced the burden of dependence on local farming and allied activities. All this has led to such a rapid rise in per capita income that Haryana now stands among the richest states in India. However, the requirements of these private industries are not necessarily met by Haryanavis but by outsiders trained and educated in major metropolises outside the state. To its own people, Haryana provides mainly small scale businesses and jobs requiring a few skills, such as clerks, accountants, security guards, drivers and porters. Thus requirements of foreign private industries do not seem to improve the demand for quality and technical education in the state. The implications of such a demand in skill and its fulfillment has far reaching consequences for the overall development in the state, especially in the sphere of education, culture, research and technology development.

[22] Sheila Bhalla, op.cit.
[23] ibid.

Haryana's relative prosperity in the rural and semi-urban areas does not provide its people with an entrepreneurial identity but only a consumer identity. Agriculture and ancillary industries in rural and semi-urban areas, do not seem to force the growth of high literacy and high educational achievements.

It was in the 1970s, with the coming of foreign investments and the Green revolution, that budget speeches in Haryana Legislative Assembly first began to talk in terms of 'first, fastest, and best' and eventually, it became the 'first state to achieve 100 per cent rural electrification, the highest rate of growth of per capita incomes, the best rural bus service'[24]. Although from the viewpoint of poverty alleviation and rural employment generation, it has progressed ahead of most states in India, it lags behind in many other economic indices such as per capita share of State Domestic Product (SDP) and farm output growth rates. It is mainly the diversification of the industrial economy and the growth of non-agricultural activities which have been the most striking features of development between 1971 to 1991[25]. Most rural industries which have come up in recent years in the south-eastern region of Haryana neither use inputs from, nor provide inputs to, agriculture, but are mainly ancillaries for the bigger town-based industries. In addition, significantly, small to medium scale trades in liquor, garage related works, transport-carriers, hotels and restaurants have emerged as second in importance to the agricultural sector[26]. For the landless and wage earners, it is the general diversification in the economy which has come to provide the 'highest rates of growth of rural employment in the country: in agriculture, in non-agriculture, and hence in all rural persondays of work'[27]. Sheila Bhalla has argued that these strategies were 'not conceived as a set of measures to relieve poverty', rather they were designed as a 'road to prosperity for the majority', they were never directed particularly in favour of the "bottom 20 per cent", and its anti-poverty effects emerged only 'as a by-product of the main thrust'[28]. The 'trickle-down' processes have not, however, spread to the lower levels. Also they have not necessitated change outside the strictly economic sphere. Haryana's health, sanitation, mortality, primary health care, education, literary pursuits and general literacy standards in rural areas do not show any signs of improvement.

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[24] ibid.
[25] ibid.
[26] Economic Survey of Haryana : 1989-90 Government of Haryana, Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Chandigarh, 1990, 2
[27] Sheila Bhalla, op. cit.
[28] ibid.

Relative economic prosperity has added to the size of the middle class in Haryana, which has been enlarged by a large number of immigrant professionals and skilled persons from other states. The growth in the size of the middle class has certainly added to the rise in literacy rates. This has also led to a substantial demand for functional literacy catering to communication needs of recent urbanisation and industrialisation. Lower classes as well as mobile villagers have, by economic necessity and partly in imitation of middle class life, started sending their children to school. This though does not seem to have created a demand for quality and higher education, particularly among women and the rural population. The demand for good quality education and higher education is limited, because government schools have generally failed, and the Government seems to do little to improve them. Private education is very expensive for the ordinary and lower classes. The mushrooming of private schools in the absence of a literate public (i.e. the parents and guardians) and inadequately trained and qualified teachers, has become a big business for sheer profit. These schools do not perform their roles expected of them. Parents of children going to private English-medium schools see education as consisting of simple functional literacy added with gaining a smattering of English. The total literacy rate in Haryana seems to be a little higher than the national average, i.e. 55.85% (for age 7 years and above, as per 1991 Census, as compared to the national average of 52.1%), with male literacy at 69.1% and female literacy at 40.47%. These are also higher than the rest of Hindi-speaking states[29], particularly the BIMARU (sick) states. The consciousness associated with the role of literacy and educational achievement however is not, in any sense, better than the BIMARU states. According to the 1991 Census, the rural literacy rate is only about 49.85% (with 64.78% male literacy and 32.51% female literacy). It is the urban literacy rate which is very high : out of a total 73.66% urban literacy rate, male literacy is 81.96% and female literacy 64.06%. These literacy figures are accompanied by drastically declining rates of female participation in higher education. The figures for 1987-88 'show a steady fall from 67.4 per cent for recruitment of rural girls in class I to V (age group 5 to 11 years), to 41.1 per cent in the middle stage, i.e. class VI to VIII (age group 11 to 14 years), at the secondary stage, i.e. class IX to XI (age group 14 to 17 years), it falls to 12.4 per cent'[30]. There is not only a big gap between male and female literacy but according to

[29] Annual Report 1993-94 for Literacy and Post Literacy Campaigns in India, DAE, 91-99
[30] Prem Chowdhry, op.cit., 214

some other surveys, the literacy rates for various groups is found to be decreasing in proportion to the declining size of their land holding and income[31].

Since high illiteracy reflect badly on the performance of a state, the government is under pressure to understate both the actual number of illiterates as well as the general quality of mass literacy. Also, official statistics are generally prone to overestimating achievements. In spite of official manipulation of these statistics, we can provide a rough idea from our field-study of how far literacy rates in Haryana 'conceal more than what they reveal'[32]. In Rohtak (as well as Panipat and Yamunanagar) it was reported that most of the literate people were engaged in physical rather than intellectual labour, even those in the non-agricultural sector were prone to backslide into 'illiteracy' or 'semi-literacy'. Hence, we need to see 'illiteracy' in Haryana as consisting of three groups: (a) those who have had no chance to go to school, (b) those who went to school for a few years but never learnt the basics except for writing and reading a few names, and (c) those who went to school, completed the formal basic course but regressed after leaving school. It is generally the second and third kinds of people in Haryana (as in rural India in general) who add to the high literacy figures of census statistics. Further, there are identifiable differences between government records and the actual position. For example, the Government in Haryana puts the enrollment rate at primary school level as high as 86.27%, but unofficial estimates[33] put it at 50-65% (roughly for all the three districts visited). Further, the Government puts the drop-out rate at primary schools at 28.13%[34] but unofficially district level TLC officials estimated[35] it to be 40-45%. In fact, due to high non-enrollment and drop-out rates, one of the key components of TLC in the state is the struggle for enrollment and retention of students in schools at least up to the primary stage.

The second category of illiterates are those who went to school for a number of years but dropped out for various problems - financial or domestic. Though they remained in school for some years, they could not acquire the basic skills either in the 3Rs or in speech. In fact, schools have been the most alienating place for them, but because of the social pressure they continued to go there, albeit irregularly. The conditions in these

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[31] ibid.

[32] Discussion with Dr. Jitendra Prasad and three PCs of Rohtak, Panipat and Yamunanagar (February-March 1995)

[33] Discussions with PCs and District TLC Secretaries of Rohtak, Panipat and Yamunanagar (February-March 1995)

[34] According to Government Report for Classes I-VIII in 1988-89, see Education For All, December (1993), D/O Education, 111

[35] Discussion with District TLC staffs in all the three districts we visited in Haryana. They agreed that government reports were highly exaggerated, though they varied in their estimate about the actual figures. The estimates quoted above were generally agreeable to them after little more discussion.

schools were found to be impoverished, both in terms of quality and content of the teaching curriculum as well as of provision for play, group-activity and learning aids. Some have only one or two rooms with no proper seating and one or two inadequately trained teachers. They do not have drinking water or toilet facilities for their students and the place usually has an abandoned look. The most astonishing aspect is the content and language of teaching which is far removed from the pupil's experience. Professor Yash Pal, the Chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Learning Burden on School Children (1993), has observed:

> I have seen the discomfort of Haryanavi children speaking their accented Hindi when they come in contact with children speaking sophisticated Hindi. Education at the elementary stage should be in the language in which you are talking to your mother. ... I was connected with an advisory committee which was set up to study the burden of schoolbags and what we found is that apart from the vast number of books, there is this problem of non-comprehension. ... I am strongly of the belief that since our education is not correct and there is something wrong, thousands of students do not know what to do after they clear Class XII. Not everybody has to go to a college. Had things been right, they should have been able to do a whole lot of things even without going to a university or a college after having learnt properly.[36]

Apart from this category of 'literates' or 'illiterates' whatever one may call them, there is another large group of 'illiterates' who learnt to read and write at school but later regressed because they do not use these skills in everyday life. These constitute the largest proportion of 'literates' in Haryana who have in effect relapsed into 'illiteracy' or, at the best, are 'semi-literates'. It is generally assumed by education department officials that skills acquired at school remain with the person ever after. In the case of Haryana, where a substantial majority of literates or semi-literates are engaged in low-skilled jobs such as police constables, security guards, automobile drivers or porters, and therefore those who rarely use the 3Rs, are found to regress. For these reasons, the overall quality of literacy in Haryana remains as bad as the other Hindi-speaking states. It is far worse than Kerela, the most literate state, and other states in India which are economically not as rich as Haryana.

Haryana's slightly higher literacy rate does not make it socially and culturally better off than other Hindi-speaking states, since the historical and social conditions for the larger public are almost similar. Haryana suffers this paradox of successful economic growth without social development and growth in education, literacy and general culture. Not only does the quality of social and educational progress remain unaffected, but there has not been much change in the nature of political-public debate and cultural life in the state.

[36] Professor Yash Pal (1995), Catching Up With Ourselves', Literacy Mission Vol. XIX, No. 1, 20-23

Modern knowledge, state and civil discourse, and the rational principles of modern institutions do not appear to have taken roots and keep pace with fast economic change. The internal structures and functions of modern institutions, their underlying assumptions, values and language, and development of requisite public literacy or popular understanding do not parallel the economic and material changes taking place in Haryana. Most modern institutions, processes and values remain external suggestions or impositions in the absence of an appreciation of their public character. Modern institutions and ideas are, therefore, resisted effectively either by way of miscomprehension of their nature and functions, or maladapted by the slightly cleverer sections of the English educated middle classes. Lesser powerful groups and classes generally remain alienated. On the whole, the language and nature of general public participation remains alienated from modern consciousness, modern institutions and values which otherwise help expand mass literacy.

Without parallel development of languages in the spheres of public participation, mass education and provision of social welfare, economic prosperity has led to a hybridisation of local culture. The traditional way of life has given way to a popular desire for urban styles of consumption of products from the outside rather than locally produced goods - a desire spurred by imitation and acquisition rather than by their use and comfort value. For example, use of cooking gas and entertainment TV has not relieved the rural women of their domestic drudgery as they now do extra amounts of work which earlier men were supposed to do. With the arrival of these luxuries, men have become more self-indulgent in the all-male practice of *hookka* smoking, card-playing, TV watching and drinking. According to 1991 Reports[37], consumption of these luxury goods and other products, which had remained almost constant for the period 1960-74, went up phenomenally in the 1980s. Consumption of country made liquors in the state between 1966-85, (apart from foreign liquor, wine and beer) had gone up by 745% whereas the overall, both male and female population growth was 30% during the same period[38]. 'It is a fact that women are spending more time today in doing both agricultural and domestic work, specially with the coming of the Green and the White revolutions'[39]. If women continue to be 'illiterate' and men too continue to be self-indulgently patriarchal, there is less likelihood that their children will value education and literacy. The reasons for school

[37] see feature article titled, 'Rural Market on the Rise', The Hindustan Times, ND, February 18, 1991. Also Chandan Mitra (1991), 'Rise of the Small Town', Sunday Observer, ND, 27 January - 2 February

[38] see the Statistical Abstract of Haryana: 1984-85, 514. Moreover, in the summer of 1996 the first thing which the newly elected state government of Haryana, led by Chief Minister Bansilal did was to introduce prohibition in the entire state as promise to his electorates.

[39] Prem Chowdhry, op.cit., 206

drop-outs and failures are of course complex and include not only family circumstances but also local practices and values which shape a child's understanding and thinking. One of the neo-literate women respondents in Deshalpur village (Rohtak district, Haryana) had this to say: 'My husband is both an alcoholic and unemployed. I am ashamed of him and sorry for my children. I have to work and earn. But because of poverty and all these arguments, my children are not interested in going to school. I always try to send them to school. They shirk school. My younger daughter is intelligent and her teacher tells me that she can go to high school if she gets support and encouragement. But the teacher also doesn't pay attention and she cries, then sometimes she comes to work with me'[40]. Thus, education is affected not only by parental care and social circumstances but also by the educational system which in practice puts little value on the learning needs of the individual learner. Hence, unless 'development' and 'progress' are measured against each individual's performance in society, rather than gross domestic product or per capita income, the top-down models of the economy and the culturally insensitive paradigms of mass education will not achieve self-sustaining growth.

The community culture in Haryana, which, as we have seen, subsisted basically on vernacular values and rural identity, has largely remained resentful towards modern institutions, administration and education. The 'trickle-down' processes of development in big private industries that started in the 70s and 80s have not reached the lower levels of the subsistence economy, as most of its surplus income has gone outside the state apart from some initial investments in establishing infrastructures and other networks. The increase in daily-wage income and importation of consumer products in the vernacular domain have not been experienced as 'progress' by the people in general, because they have not led to their increased empowerment and satisfaction. The growth of consumer culture has, of course, led to a desire for acquisition and emulation, particularly among the relatively well off sections. However, their vernacular and subaltern identity, which has been strongly linked to a sense of being *dehati* (rural), physically tough, patriotic, self-sacrificing, hard-working yet illiterate, has now received a boost with the relative economic prosperity during last two decades. This mismatch results in exacerbation of 'insecurity and instability as masses of capital and workers shift from one line of production to another, leaving whole sectors devastated, while the perpetual flux in consumer wants, tastes and needs becomes a permanent locus of uncertainty and struggle'[41]. This mismatch

[40] Interview with a neo-literate lady, Srimati Mukesh Rani, February 1995, Deshalpur (Rohtak)
[41] Madan Sarup (1996), Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World, 98-99

and uncertainty however, with relative prosperity, provides the middle classes in Haryana with a compensation and self-gratification whereby they are able to transcend the frustrations of a *'dehati'* status through identification with the urban consumer culture. It has also blinded them to the more strenuous path of educational achievement. Though elitist development of private industries based on foreign capital, may allow some redistribution of wealth, it will neither be able to sustain the whole population nor make any independent progress in science and technology. Also the gap between the modern and the traditional, the rural and the urban, the 'literates' and the 'illiterates' and the 'ruler' and the 'ruled' will keep on increasing and cross intersect each other in multiple and complex ways which will further enforce more segmentation and hierarchy.

Modern consumption habits have come to provide them a new mode of being, a new way of gaining identity, meaning and prestige in contemporary society. Unlike the tribal community in Bihar, quick material prosperity and consumerism have become the central organisational and homogenization factor in contemporary Haryanavi life. The Haryanavis, along with the rising sections of western Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Punjab believe that possession and display of the signs of affluence alone, rather than education, culture and technological development will bring them long-term happiness and stability. Though in their political interests they are highly active as well as sensitive to issues that affect them directly and immediately, their capacity to organise, articulate and institutionalise empowering values and aspirations, and to participate in all spheres (whether economic or cultural) has been wanting. The organisation of activities which require discussion and transactions, knowledge of print and the world of letters is not a major form of public activity and cultural recreation[42]. Reverential attitudes to knowledge have given way to defensive concerns of an immediate nature, mostly in terms of political and economic self-aggrandizement. This has led to assertion of group demands that are largely agro-economic or political rather than educational or cultural. Surprisingly, in a relatively prosperous state, there have been demands for water, electricity, and subsidies in agriculture, but never for opening new schools or libraries, and there has never been any protest against mismanagement in schools or colleges. Thus, with the growth of small towns in relatively prosperous economic conditions and the rise in consumption of luxury goods, issues of cultural modernity and education have been bypassed.

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[42] Most of respondents in our field-study reiterated that 'in general love for books and serious scholarship is not in the culture of contemporary Haryanavis who are dominated by a peasant Jat culture' - a statement uttered by the chief of Deshalpur village (undated)

Nevertheless, Haryanavis also take pride in what was in the vernacular domain of their traditional arts of living, outside the modern consumer life. This identity still holds strong through subaltern ways of seeing themselves as hard-working yet simple, innocent, warm-hearted, straight forward and humorously outspoken[43]. Haryana is also experiencing growing political participation along with strengthening of its vernacular and subaltern identity as can be seen in terms of the existence of both local and national political parties and the growth of political activity. In last few decades, participation in democracy and electoral processes, both at local and national levels, has given them general political literacy by bringing them into contact with the world of ideas outside their own region. In states like Haryana where the political power base of the regional government primarily lies among its agriculture caste-communities, the state mediates uncomfortably with the competing demands of the modern economy and the 'statistically vaster, backward, populous, agrarian economy'[44]. There is certainly growth in political literacy, but at the same time politics in Haryana is becoming increasingly limited in its cultural and social concerns. The mobile social groups of Haryana, coming from rural and semi-urban areas, have also started realising the utilitarian value of the 3Rs. It is because of the socio-economic factors such as expansion of capitalism, modern urban life and its mass communication needs which is now slowly pushing these mobile rural people of Haryana to recognise the instrumental value of literacy. For this reason, learners enrolled under TLC in Rohtak were interested in learning some rudimentary 3Rs. It is under these conditions that the success or failure of state sponsored TLC initiative in ten out of sixteen districts in Haryana has to be analysed.

[43] Observations from our field-visit. This apart, my early association with Haryanavi friends and family when I shifted to Delhi in 1986. Also see Rajbir Deswal (1991)

[44] S. Kaviraj (1994), 'Crisis of the nation-state in India', Political Studies Vol. XLII , 115-129

Part Two

TLC in Haryana - A Case Study

1. THE MAIN QUEST OF THIS CASE-STUDY

In their study of TLC in Panipat district (Haryana) Prem Chand and A Matthew have remarked that 'government-sponsored programmes' enjoy a very 'low credibility among the people' and hence until now, most adult education programmes (including the TLC) have met 'public indifference and the proverbial cynicism of the educated'[1]. Most official and non-official analyses of adult education programmes in India, until now, have concentrated mainly on a simplified explanation in terms of a dichotomous division between failures and successes[2]. Within a simplified and dichotomous explanation, government officials see massive turn-outs during the mobilisation and publicity phases of TLC as an element of success, and hence of 'participation'. They also equate these public turn-outs and physical presence of learners in classrooms as a sign of success of the 'campaign'[3]. It is true that partial mobilisation has been achieved under the present TLC, but this was achieved earlier too. Earlier literacy campaigns are reported to have begun with euphoria but then also fizzled out after sometime without any long-term success[4].

It is necessary here to distinguish between the long-term and short-term gains of literacy. For it is ultimately motivation and participation in interactive learning which can create long-term success for the TLC. In our case study of tribals in Bihar, we have already seen how it is not just the content of classroom teaching that activates desire to be literate but also the literacy practice itself, both as an aspect of social and public institutions as well as an aspect of inter-ethnic relations. The need for literacy in Haryana is based on a new desire created by rapid urbanisation, expansion of consumer culture and new modes of trade, communication and transport. In this chapter, we will study a Haryanavi village, and will focus on the nature of literacy need in Haryana and analyse its relevance for pedagogical theory and practices of the TLC. In Haryana, the 'illiterate' population is part of lower and middle rank social groups which dominate its mainstream life. This group

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[1] Prem Chand and A Matthew (1993), 'Fourth Battle of Panipat - TLC in Haryana', EPW , October 2

[2] see, for example, how the Report of the Expert Group 1994 on TLC has been compressed under two sub-headings of 'Strengths' and 'Weaknesses' in the Literacy Mission (a journal published by D/O Education), Vol. XVIII, NO. 11, Nov. - Dec. 1994.

[3] Every district report on Progress of TLC, sent to the Central government (D/O Education) is reported in this way. See various District Project Proposals and Reports as mentioned in the bibliography section.

[4] R.K. Agnihotri (1994), 'Campaign-based Literacy Programmes: The case of the Ambedkar Nagar Experiment in Delhi', Language and Education, Vol. 8, Nos. 1&2, 47-56; and also S.Y. Shah (1989), Adult Education in Bihar

does not form an exclusive or an ethnically different group. Hence it perceives its literacy needs more in terms of needs of functional and urban communication, rather than for inter-ethnic communication.

In most districts in Haryana, TLC is not under the direct responsibility of the administration. It is under the responsibility of a voluntary organisation called Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS). Since the general framework for the implementation of TLC is the same in all districts, and in all states, here we will discuss a few comparative aspects of Rohtak TLC which differ from the Dumka case-study. Rohtak, unlike Dumka is neither a tribal district nor a backward district. It is economically a flourishing district which consists of a large peasant population belonging to the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities. Unlike Dumka, TLC in Rohtak is mainly under a voluntary organisation. Hence, we will examine how implementation of TLC under a voluntary organisation (i.e. BGVS) is different from the official district administration. We will examine to what extent a voluntary organisation such as the BGVS, with a relatively large organisational network, has been able to articulate and institutionalise the participatory aspects of literacy learning, and the constraints on its practices. Individual and isolated voluntary organisations (VOs) had been involved in the government's literacy campaigns in the past too, but earlier, these campaigns were implemented and controlled mainly by the district administration. The VOs used to assist the district administration in their task rather than vice-versa, and hence they ended up being non-participatory, disjointed and fragile because of control exercised by a highly centralised bureaucracy. This time the Government, in principle, has given the BGVS a major responsibility in implementation of TLC in a large number of districts and states. We need to examine how far both the government and the BGVS have been able to devolve power and institutionalise a decentralized, participatory literacy and discursive practice. This situation offers interesting insights into how far the government is interested in institutionalising community initiative and empowering the local people towards becoming a vigilant and literate public. For our field-study, we visited three districts in Haryana (including Rohtak) in February-March 1995[5]. Various villages visited in the three districts of Rohtak, Panipat and Yamunanagar are given in Table 1.

[5] Three districts in Haryana (as given in the Table) were visited between 01/02/1995 to 06/03/1995. But the case study based in Rohtak district involved first three weeks. The field-study involved both participant observation and personal discussions (structured as well as unstructured) with respondents who included mainly adult learners, volunteer teachers and officials but also some local people who were interested the daily affairs of TLC. For details of the survey design see our Introductory Chapter.

Table 1 : **Field Area Covered Under This Study**

Districts	**Villages visited in various Blocks**	**Type of Target group of TLC**
Rohtak	3/1 (Nunamajra, Shahpur and Deshalpur villages in Bahadurgarh block)	mostly women, some Scheduled Castes (SCs), a few Muslims
Panipat	4/2 (Ahar and Pathri in Israna block; Pawti village and Municipal area under Samalka block	mostly women, some SCs, and a few Muslims
Yamunanagar	4/1 (Dharwa, Bhojpur, Dayalgarh and Sughmajra in Jagadhari block	all women including few SCs and Muslim women

Barring Shahpur village, the other two villages in Rohtak district in the table, had either completed the TLC phase or stopped functioning. That means, only Shahpur was available for observation as an ongoing project. Other districts and villages too were visited to assess the official reports and to find some comparative trends. Learners and volunteers were called or visited at their homes and interviewed. However, TLC in Deshalpur village in Bahadurgarh block of Rohtak district is our principal case-study in Haryana. Officially, Deshalpur is the first village declared as 'totally literate' by NLM norms. The extent of TLC coverage in Haryana is given below in Table 2.

Table 2 - TLC Coverage in Haryana [6]

Total Districts - 16 Projects - 10	Teaching start date	Agency in-charge	Progress on 23/09/94	Age Group	Estimate Target	Effective Enrollment
1. Rohtak	**01/06/93**	**BGVS**	**dragging**	**15-45**	**188755**	**100000**
2. Panipat	**01/09/91**	**BGVS**	**dragging**	**15-45**	**160000**	**148402**
3. Yamunanagar	**01/11/92**	**DA***	**dragging**	**9-45**	**103323**	**95055**
4. Ambala	16/06/93	DA*	dragging	15-45	117762	62970
5. Bhiwani	01/01/93	BGVS	dragging	15-45	212724	59612
6. Hissar	15/09/94	BGVS	new	9-45	no report	no report
7. Jind	01/01/93	BGVS	dragging	15-45	258626	110000
8. Kurukshetra	27/10/94	DA*	new	NA	no report	no report
9. Sirsa	12/11/93	BGVS	in progress	15-45	143787	46539
10. Sonepat	06/11/94	DA*	new	NA	no report	no report
Total Projects - 10		BGVS - 6 DA* - 4	none completed			52.54% of target

(DA* = District Administration)

2. TLC COVERAGE IN HARYANA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ROHTAK

At the end of 1994, TLC projects had been sanctioned by the central government in 10 out of 16 districts in Haryana. One of the district projects, in Panipat, was progressing towards the post-literacy-campaign[7] (PLC) phase, though officially none of the districts had completed the first phase. The first phase, generally called the TLC phase requires

[6] The Table is based on NIC Computer Cell Data (as on 23/091994) provided by DAE, New Delhi

[7] see Appendix 3 given at the end.

completion of a set of three primers by the target group (see Table 2). Each district project is supposed to cover all the adult 'illiterates' in the age-group 15-35 years. The actual choice of the age-limit is left to the discretion of district officials. Some districts have chosen the 15-45 age-group, a few others the 9-45, although the central government prefers the 15-35 age-group. Because of the differences in the choice of age-limit, there are serious discrepancies in the literacy figures quoted in various central government reports[8]. Moreover, each district has fallen drastically short of its target. For example, only 531 thousand learners are effectively enrolled as against the TLC target of 2041 thousand 'illiterates' (15-35 age-group), while actually there are 5880 thousand (nearly 6 million 'illiterates' out of a total 16.5 million population, according to other sources quoting Census figures) 'illiterates' above 7 years of age in the entire state[9]. Of the 531 thousand effectively enrolled, only 104 thousand have completed all the three primers under TLC[10]. One district in Table 2 reported to be 'in progress' was actually half way through implementation and had not completed all the three primers for any section of its target group. Six district projects, though ahead of others, have been officially reported to be 'dragging', meaning that though they had completed three primers for a few learners, they were lagging behind in making the majority of learners fully literate. These categories (in Table 2) - 'new', 'dragging' and 'in progress' - are used by DAE officials in New Delhi to report the implementation status of TLC projects. However, in six of the sixteen districts in Haryana, TLC has not been taken up by the administration. In these six districts, reportedly the district administration has 'no interest' in starting the project - a phenomenon quite common in most of the educationally backward states of the Hindi-speaking region[11]. In case of the officially approved projects, three district-projects were reported to be in their preparatory stage where teaching had not begun. Only five of the district-projects, i.e. Yamunanagar, Panipat, Jind, Ambala and Rohtak had reported some progress. In these districts about 104 thousand (12.55% of the total enrolled) had completed all the three primers. A brief account of literacy achievement (as officially reported at the end of 1994) in each district is given here.

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[8] Compare the figures given in 'Annual Report 1994-94 Literacy and Post Literacy Campaigns in India' compiled by DAE, August 1994, 97, the NIC Computer Cell (DAE) statistical data on TLC as on 23/09/1994 and the 'Statistical Database For Literacy', NIAE, 1992.

[9] Annual Report 1993-94 : Literacy and Post Literacy Campaigns in India, DAE, 91; also Statistical Database For Literacy, Vol. 1 (1992) NIAE, 9

[10] All figures quoted from the Annual Report 1993-94, op.cit., 97

[11] Hindi-speaking states are generally marked by an acute lack of political and administrative will, a cause officially attributed to general backwardness in the region. See Arun Ghosh Committee Report 1994 , 38

According to official reports, the Yamunanagar project, sanctioned in December 1992, had covered 41 thousand learners, a 40.07% achievement of a target of 103 thousand, but they had hoped to enroll more[12]. Public opinion and informal discussion with a few officials during our field-visit seemed to suggest that most of these figures were fudged. The district administration which controlled the project (though officially, it was also placed under a registered voluntary organisation) was barely interested in getting the work done[13]. The project was carried out half-heartedly on a nominal basis in one or two Community Development (CD) blocks, to insure against any possible external inspection. In Yamunanagar, many middle rank TLC officials, VTs, adult learners and a few villagers confirmed that the district administration had taken no interest in implementing the scheme[14]. Wherever they showed us around, there appeared to be a complete lack of commitment on the part of the VTs. Adult learners at Dharwa village (Jagadhari Block) reported that there was neither any publicity nor any teaching-class held. The VTs confirmed this without any hesitation once they realised that it was not an official enquiry. In Bhojpur village of Jagadhari block, which the district officials reported as having performed 'excellently', it was found that out of a population of about 500, surprisingly, only 27 learners were enrolled, who reportedly did complete all three primers. Only two of them were available for discussion, and they were found to be able to write nothing other than their own names. At the end of our discussion they admitted that they had not learnt anything[15].

The Panipat project was sanctioned in March 1991 and was under BGVS responsibility for its implementation. It reported an achievement of 37.52%, that is, they had taught 60 thousand learners out of a target of 160 thousand, to read and write[16]. The figures reported seem to be more or less genuine as the BGVS officials were determined not to inflate figures which may in the end undermine their reputation. They had no vested interest in inflated statistical figures since theirs was a new organisation created on an ad-hoc basis, and was at the mercy of the district administration for financial and infrastructural support. During our field-visit we found that both the villagers and the

[12] Annual Report 1993-94 , op. cit., 91-99

[13] Interview with Rajendra Dahiya and Kulbhushan Dahiya, KRPs (Rohtak, 10/02/1995); Rajendra Chhoker and Rajpal Dahiya, KRPs (Panipat, 26/02/95 and 27/02/95); Dr. Ashok Arora, (Yamunanagar, 06/03/95)

[14] Informal discussions (between 01/03/95 to 05/03/95) with a few middle rank officials in Yamunanagar district TLC headquarters and group discussion with VTs, adult women learners and a few villagers in Dharwa, Bhojpur and Dayalgarh villages, it emerged that 'these reports were true'.

[15] Group discussion (on 03/03/1995) with Ms. Leela Devi (neo-literate), Ms. Rabia Begum (neo-literate), two VTs, namely, Ms. Sanjida and Ms. Raj Rani, and 10-12 other villagers of Bhojpur village.

[16] Annual Report 1993-94, op.cit., 91-99

learners in the area recognised the BGVS's sincerity and commitment towards literacy[17]. However, much of the TLC project implementation under the BGVS supervision was beset by an uneasy relation with the district administration which controlled each and every important aspect, particularly the finances. The BGVS volunteers had to guard themselves against the professional jealousy of government officials, their prejudices and high-handedness. This affected the zeal and autonomy of the BGVS volunteers. The district officials' suspicious attitude towards BGVS activities in mass mobilisation and public participation has hampered the progress of the project, and thus of literacy which in case of Panipat, was supposed to move to the next, post-literacy (PLC) and continuing education (CE) phases. For these reasons, literacy levels achieved by the BGVS in Panipat remained limited in terms of numbers and fragile in terms of the skills learnt.

The achievements reported by Jind district, a project sanctioned in December 1992, were only 0.4% of its target of 259 thousand learners[18]. They had enrolled only 48 thousand learners. Even in official terms, this is an 'insignificant achievement' for a period of more than a year[19]. Unofficially, a few respondents in Rohtak and elsewhere reported that 'their progress was halted half-way because of takeover of the programme by the district administration from the BGVS',[20] this is another example of an unreliable support given by the bureaucracy to the voluntary organisations. The project in Ambala (sanctioned in December 1992) also, according to official reports, had 'not made any headway'[21]. Its achievement, measured in terms of NLM criteria, was 0.07%. Only 67 thousand learners were enrolled as against the target of 118 thousand. The projects in the districts of Bhiwani and Sirsa, both sanctioned in 1992, were reported to be very slow in implementation whereas the Hissar, Kurukshetra and Sonipat projects, sanctioned in 1994, were reported to be in their preparatory stage[22].

3. TLC IN ROHTAK DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF DESHALPUR VILLAGE

The TLC project in Rohtak district was sanctioned in December 1992 with an initial target of 360 thousand learners as per the 1991 census (250 thousand according to

[17] We visited four villages (between 21/02/95 to 27/02/95) in Panipat district, and met almost 12 neo-literates, 6 VTs, 5 KRPs and about 15-20 senior villagers for a long chat and discussion.
[18] TLC Annual Report 1993-94 , op. cit., 91-99
[19] ibid.
[20] Interview and discussion with two KRPs, Rajendra Dahiya and Kulbhushan Dahiya on 10/02/1995 at Rohtak district TLC headquarters. Kulbhushan Dahiya was earlier associated with Jind district TLC project before its takeover by the district administration.
[21] TLC Annual Report 1993-94 , op. cit., 91-99
[22] ibid.

later estimates when one of the sub-divisions was detached from it). The task of implementing the scheme was undertaken by the BGVS, which, though slow, was progressing in early 1995, albeit with little cooperation from the district administration. The district had conducted an independent survey of TLC coverage in the rural areas where 188 thousand learners in the age group 9-45 years were identified. They had not surveyed urban areas until February 1995 because only rural areas were their first priority. However, the survey conducted by the BGVS in the rural areas of Rohtak too, as elsewhere, was mainly a head-counting exercise rather than a community survey or a linguistic-competency survey. Like the Dumka district officials, the BGVS officials too followed an old bureaucratic method in surveying. They too treated the survey as a quantitative fact-finding exercise, as an official requirement rather than an educational requirement. We have already discussed the shortcomings of such a survey in our previous case-study. Of the 188 thousand 'illiterates' (age group 9-45 years) identified by the survey, it was estimated that 69.05% were females and some 30.1% were Scheduled Caste. That means, less than 1% of men belonging to general category of male population are enrolled as 'illiterate', which is certainly untrue. The district, divided into eleven administrative sub-divisions, has 388 villages. Of the identified learners, about 115 thousand were enrolled, of whom only 4115 learners completed all the three primers, some 11,000 completed two primers and about 25,000 completed only the first primer by the end of 1994. As the official reports put it, 'the progress of the campaign is very slow in terms of enrollment and the persons made literate so far',[23] but our field-visit confirmed that the limited progress reported so far was more or less genuine. A visit to Deshalpur village and two other villages of this district confirmed that literacy classes were conducted regularly in all the TLC centres, with partial achievements in learning of the 3Rs, which however were likely to regress if they were not supplemented by post-literacy efforts to link up with continuing education.

3.1 STAGES IN TLC LAUNCH AND THE MODE OF MOBILISATION

All four stages of TLC, namely, (a) survey and planning, (b) environment building or the mobilisation phase consisting of campaign and publicity, (c) teaching and learning, and (d) evaluation and monitoring, are similar in all states or districts, except for a few minor differences in methodology and the content of the actual programme. Like all other

[23] ibid. Also, Rohtak District Project Report titled, 'Resume of Rohtak Total Literacy Campaign', published by Jan Saksharta Samiti, Rohtak, date not specified but the report covers until the end of 1994.

districts, TLC in Rohtak started with intense planning of activities. The planning consisted of identifying resource persons, voluntary teachers, developing learning materials. This required a survey (mentioned earlier) at the village and CD block levels. The second stage was the environment building phase in which public meetings, rallies, demonstrations, wall writings, street plays were organised simultaneously with the work of survey and enrollment of learners. The publicity and campaign designs in Rohtak were similar to Dumka (Bihar) except that messages in Rohtak were conveyed to adult learners through a local genre of popular songs called '*swang*' and '*ragini*' in the Haryanavi dialect. '*Swang*' is a local performing genre, a kind of street-play, and '*ragini*' is a traditional folk-song about local legends, heroes and proverbs of popular wisdom. '*Ragini*' is in fact a form of narrative which is rich in both prosody and parody. *Ragini* uses familiar words and statements about local images, by using effective patterns of stress and intonation (prosody) in the Haryanavi dialect to mark the main features of a message or composition or a text. It also uses parody (mimicry) in its form so that meaning-effect in the composition is produced in a humorous, satirical and dialogical way[24]. Apart from being a local genre of popular entertainment and cultural enjoyment of episodic events, its charm lies mainly in linguistic skills which use pronouns, conjunctions, various sorts of adverbs, demonstrative words and phrases which, though repetitive, are emphatic in their message and content. Words like '*kyon*' (why), '*kyonki*' (because), '*magar*' (but), *'apani juban'* (our speech), *'unaki juban'* (their speech), etc., help create context and coherence with the experience of the listeners and allow them to participate in recreating the theme and the narrative in their own way. Both its prosody and parody bring the text of the narrative in direct communication with the audience.

Thus the messages conveyed through these genres during huge rallies, demonstrations and public meetings were intensely popular. A significant fact about these publicity features is that in most districts TLC officials have been successful in persuading people to participate. Notwithstanding the success of this phenomenon, the officials miss the point that these popular communication styles and linguistic features can also be used to achieve pedagogical success of the TLC. The dominant expert view considers these popular cultural communication forms as part of the oral culture of common and 'illiterate' people, and hence either inadequate or irrelevant for modern mass literacy practices. Such is the dominant conception of school- and print-based literacy practices that even when

[24] Interview-cum-discussion with Rajendra Dahiya, a Key Resource Person (KRP) and Project Coordinator (PC) on 10/02/1995 in Rohtak district TLC headquarters.

these experts wish to approach the people of the oral world, they assume that adults should start language learning as beginners. The learners are supposed to start like a beginner or like a child beginning to learn a new or a foreign language, rather than from what, unlike the child, they have already acquired in their own mother-tongue. Most traditional educators and government officials under the influence of dominant high culture, dominant discourse of educational institutions, and belief in the purity of the standard language, find it difficult to understand the logic of adopting popular forms of communication in teaching of general subjects, particularly language-teaching. It requires some extra effort, research and training on their part but due to ignorance and lack of expertise, and also because of their passionate conservatism and bureaucratic mentality, the necessary initiative is still wanting.

3.2 DESHALPUR VILLAGE CASE STUDY

Deshalpur is a remote village in the Bahadurgarh block linked by road but without any public transport system entering the village. The village has a small population of about 400 which consists mainly of Brahmins, Jats and some Scheduled castes. All the Scheduled caste people in the village are landless, living in small huts in a 'hand-to-mouth' economic condition. It is a small farming village mainly dependent on agriculture and cattle rearing, but quite a few of the households had at least one member in the defence services. Some are low-paid daily wage-earners who work in Bahadurgarh or Delhi. Most inhabitants have little use of print-literacy in their everyday lives. They use the local Haryanavi dialect in all their social interactions and transactions except for official purposes like banks and Post-Offices. Here, too, they prefer to speak their own tongue, though most men and women are 'grass-roots bilinguals', that is, in addition to their mother-tongue, they also speak and understand local-popular (but not standard) Hindi. Haryanavis have an added advantage in learning standard Hindi in the sense that their own dialect, called *Bangaru* or simply *Haryanavi* is quite closer to the standard *Khari-boli* form of Hindi.

Most of the villagers have a steady income but they are poor by general standards of consumption, health, hygiene and education. There is one Primary School in the vicinity of the village where children from other neighbouring villages also come to study, but there is no nearby Middle or High School, any hospital or health centre or private doctor to approach in emergency situations. The villagers mainly depend on Bahadurgarh for their local market and essential services which is some 10-12 kilometers away and half-way

between Rohtak and Delhi. It is this nearness to a growing market, and the availability of daily waged employment in Delhi and Rohtak, which have necessitated a new need for numeracy and literacy among the villagers. For example, most female respondents in our fieldstudy reported that due to lack of skill in the 3Rs, they had enormous difficulty in travelling and trading in the nearby fast-growing city centres. The rural women, who earlier used to be escorted by their men, now find it difficult to travel on their own, as new communication (written) signs and bus route numbers have been introduced recently.

Deshalpur is an ordinary village by all standards except that it is fortunately near two big urban centres, linked by road and provided with irrigation and electricity supply. In Deshalpur, one can find a few other features sharply distinct from other villages in north India. Significantly, in this village no one was completely starving, yet a few, particularly the SCs, could not afford more than one meal a day. The majority cannot afford to educate their children properly with provision for books, stationaries and clothing to go to government schools where education is free. Although a good majority (80%) of these villagers had recourse to entertainment provided by cheap, locally-produced TVs or transistors, and have a roof over their heads, as many as 20% were sleeping rough. It turned out to be a representative village for our case study of rural Haryana where in general poverty dominates the social and cultural life of people, yet where some crumbs of economic development do reach people to save them from starvation and destitution.

The villagers are involved mainly in manual skills either related to farming or work in towns requiring less specific literacy skills. They see themselves as hard-working, humorous and hospitable but also consider themselves to be 'illiterate' and naive, though only 44 of them (40 females and 4 males) had enrolled under TLC. In fact, out of the farm season, most migrate to towns for jobs and many fell outside the TLC age criteria of 9-45 years. There were as many as a dozen children, mainly girls, aged 9-15 years who were neither enrolled in schools nor under the TLC. In the village, only a few (10-12%) had education of a secondary level and some 5-6% had the opportunity to go to a college. As mentioned, even those with school or college experience have a poor literacy level in standard Hindi. They generally prefer to speak the local Haryanavi dialect, not standard Hindi. Both the educated and the ordinary people who speak popular Hindi have a strong regional accent and vocabulary. There are however clear occupational variations in the accent and use of vocabulary in everyday conversation. Less outgoing farmers, particularly women, converse only in the local Haryanavi dialect and are cut off from the outside world of gossip, information and languages of modern discourse. Overall, the village has no

interest in newspapers or magazines, though a few adult and old men take an interest in political news broadcasts on radio or on TV. Almost every household has at least a radio and about one-third have a small TV. The majority use these for entertainment, mainly watching or listening to Hindi films and songs and some other popular serials, dramas or epics like the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. They do not have much interest in social, political or educational programmes other than these. There is no library in any of the nearby villages. The little exposure they have with the mass media or educational experiences does not seem to have affected their lives directly, though it certainly has affected them indirectly, adding to a general growth in social and political awareness among the villagers. This is evident from the fact that they recognise and speak of certain changes in their public life, in social attitudes and practices made visible in younger generations' behaviour. They also point out difficulties faced in changing from one practice or attitude to another, which shows that there must have been some hesitation or conflict when the change was occurring. Thus, it is very well recognised that people, particularly the women and Scheduled castes, are now more aware of equality, individual self-respect, dignity of labour and other social freedoms. These changes in social consciousness can be attributed only to a general exposure to the language of modern politics, and concepts like equality, liberty, rights and autonomy discussed in public life, media and educational institutions. One of the housewives had this to say: 'earlier we were abused, scolded, ill-treated and sometimes beaten by the rich farmers, the police and our men for the slightest of mistakes, but now it is not so common. Nobody has taught us about these things, nor did we have any education (formal instruction), yet slowly with hesitation and confusion we have come to understand and assert ourselves. We do sometimes speak and try to argue.'[25] Though the life of lower-caste men has necessitated some change in their social and political consciousness, it has not affected the lives of women (of all sections) in Haryana. The condition of women who work both inside homes and on farms, with their faces and heads covered under a veil, and who have to interact only among their own gender, does not seem to have changed much.

3.3 TLC's ACHIEVEMENTS IN DESHALPUR

Forty females along with four males had enrolled to learn the 3Rs. There were altogether only four volunteer teachers (VTs) available to teach them. Two of the VTs were from the same village, while the other two came from neighbouring villages, a fact which

[25] Mrs. Mukesh Rani (Hindu-Brahmin, 28 years old) in an informal conversation at her home on 18/02/1995

points to the scarcity of literate persons in the village. Nevertheless, in a meeting of Sub-Project Coordinators (SPCs) of the Bahadurgarh block, the work of these VTs, who constitute the lowest cadre of TLC activists, was acknowledged and it was appreciated that they were sincere and had done a good job[26]. Some of the learners who were quick to learn helped their fellow villagers to learn the 3Rs. This demonstrates that, given the opportunity and appropriate learning conditions, people do have the interest and aptitude to learn the 3Rs and to help others acquire literacy and print-based knowledge. Classes were regularly held 4-5 hours a week, on a seasonal basis (e.g., during the off season) and in a span of one- and a half years, all the learners were reported to have completed the three prescribed primers.

Of the 44 learners who learnt to read and write, only 20 were available for discussion and interview during our field-visit. Not all learners were available at one time, but in many cases, we got their responses in more than one meeting. Of those available, some gave interesting and detailed accounts of their learning experience. One VT was also available who helped in interpretation and conversation in the Haryanavi dialect. Strikingly some (5/20) of the women and one SC man, were found to have developed an extra interest in reading and writing and had developed some reasonable amount of comprehension skills to relate and interpret a given story[27]. These women had personal interest in cultivating the habit of reading and writing because they had difficulties in communicating or writing to their husbands or sons, who are military servicemen posted outside the state. Given facilities for further learning or reading, it appeared that these women and men would continue to build on their newly acquired skills. These are ordinary women, they have similar though poor social and economic backgrounds. They also work on farms under similar conditions. They were equally shy in speaking to strangers and none of them had had any previous schooling. These women appeared to be, by temperament, much happier and wittier than others, as they talked and laughed with us, made jokes on the content of primers, and the attitude of officials. They had a cultivated sense of belonging to a literate or 'semi-literate' family for they tried to present themselves more coherently by

[26] I was informally invited as an observer to a meeting held on 16/02/1995 at Bahadurgarh in which about a dozen of Sub-Project Coordinators (including some VTs and MTs) participated to discuss various issues related to TLC implementation in their area.

[27] Individual interviews and group discussion with Mrs. Mukesh Rani (Hindu-Brahmin, 28 years old), Mrs. Anita Devi (Hindu-Jat, 25 years old), Mrs. Darshini Devi (Hindu-Jat, 28 years), Mrs. Rama Devi (Hindu-Jat, 46 years), Mrs. Somvati (Hindu, Scheduled Caste, 27 years), neo-literate turned Volunteer teacher (VT), Mrs. Nirmala Devi (Hindu, Scheduled Caste, 32 years), and Mr. Kali Ram Bhagri (Hindu, Schedule Caste, 24 years) on the 17th, 18th and 19th of February 1995. All these 5-6 people appeared to be high profile learners, meaning they were more interested in functions of reading and writing other than classroom teaching, though some (1-2) in lesser degrees.

articulating and monitoring their speech. It seems this cultivation had come to them through interactions with their husbands' friends. It is this identity perhaps which enabled them to pick up a new interest in reading and writing. Three of these women had started writing letters to their husbands. They also reported that they occasionally looked at newspaper headlines. Because of their personal need to write letters to their husbands, they appeared to be self-interested learners, in contrast to other women or learners. Other learners, particularly women, were found to be shy, hesitant and nervous in speaking about what they had learnt. One of the women, Srimati Rama Devi, in her late 40s, after reading the BGVS Primers and learning about the planetary system, e.g., the physical realities about the Earth, the Moon and the Sun, stopped worshipping the Sun[28]. It may not have been just a new fact for her, for she must have been told a number of other such facts about life through other sources, about which she may or may not have changed her views. Here, what made her review her own deep-rooted faith in the worship of Sun as a god must have been not simply the acquisition of new knowledge but also a new way of relating to the world, of association as a new member of the print world. Her conscious utterance about the distinction between *'murkhon-wali duniyaan'* (fool's world) and *'padhne-likhne-wali duniyaan'* (literate world) is indicative of such an association. The modern print-world was for her nothing like a magical world, although in a traditional rural Hindu society, a printed book is often considered holy and sacrosanct. Her interaction among new social and literate groups and her own sense of involvement and joy in reading these primers appeared to be somewhat reinforcing her sense of becoming a new self. Whether or not the BGVS primers were imaginative in their content, lucid in their presentation and interesting in terms of values and entertainment, it could certainly be said that they contained simple expressions and statements and facts related to identifiable experiences which stimulated the interests of their readers. It is the need and context as well as the very process of reading which helped this woman to rethink her experience and discover new truths.

Two other women, Srimati Darshini Devi and Srimati Anita Devi, had discovered that knowledge of the 3Rs, apart from enabling them to read newspapers or stories and write letters or keep personal accounts, could also assist them in expanding their knowledge about rights, such as the equality of women and the girl-child[29]. Anita told us that she could now 'comprehend a given text or story, e.g., the text of TV serials and film

[28] Interview and discussion with Rama Devi (Hindu-Jat, 46 years old woman) on 19/02/1995.
[29] Group discussion with Anita Devi (Hindu-Jat, 25 years old woman), Darshini Devi (Hindu-Jat, 28 years woman) on 18/02/1995.

stories, much better'. Earlier, she complained, she 'skipped attention on many statements because of difficult words and sentences in alien Hindi' and many a times, she could not 'understand not only their meanings but also their inter-connection'[30]. Anita was also able to advise us with confidence about how literacy classes could be made more interesting :

> 'TLC classes and reading materials should contain themes and stories which we would like to read and discuss on our own, like job skills, fun, journey accounts. Not all those given in the TLC primers. They contain some interesting things but they are not worth reading a second time. It should contain something we would like to imagine, discuss, think and talk about, or see around ... also about problems, dreams and joys. A few common things of village interest could also be discussed ... like, ... non-availability of clean drinking water; ... there is some prescription (*updesh*) about drinking clean water but there is no discussion about its provision and problems. There could be a discussion about the role of local teachers, or non-availability of good teachers and a good High school in the area, shortage and problem absenteeism of primary school teachers, lack of public transport, hospitals, pharmacy, dispensary, etc..'[31]

Here, unlike the Santhal tribals of Bihar, we do not find Haryanavi women's utterances emphasising identity differences in terms of 'we' and 'they', i.e. in terms of inter-ethnic or inter-group relations. Instead, we find in these women's utterances, an image of what one should and could have in order to achieve personal fulfillment. We find Anita and other women like her to be assertive of their own rights which help them to become what they want to be. For example, Anita did not say, as the prevailing social belief would suggest, that these provisions were supposed to be made by the government automatically. Surprisingly, with conscious self-assertion, she points out that 'our classrooms and general meetings should have some discussions on various problems and themes which will enable people to think and speak'[32]. She implied that such discussions would help people think and rethink experience and then speak coherently about their own problems. Also variability in subjects for discussion is very important for Anita because they cater to varied interests suited to emotional and cognitive intelligence of learners. Here Anita is quite right in establishing a cognitive link between socio-cultural interest and intelligibility in literacy learning. In discussing personal and shared experiences, people necessarily enter into a process of selection and emphasis. While articulating their own experience, people do link the social with the personal to produce a narrative, which in reality is their identity-story of 'becoming' or 'being' the person they are. It is the skill in giving coherence to our own experience in speech articulation through coding-decoding,

[30] Interview and discussion with Anita Devi on 18/02/1995
[31] Anita Devi on 18/02/1995
[32] Anita Devi on 18/02/1995

exclusion and stress that is necessary in constructing a story of a particular kind to produce a particular effect, and this constitutes literacy for more articulate learners like Anita. Technically speaking, the function of literacy is related to speech articulation for communicating one's inner thoughts and experiences. It depends on the individual or the society what uses they make of the knowledge gained as a result of those literacy skills. Literacy as tool/skill in thought and expression can help in discovering a truth for oneself, without external suggestion or assistance. Such an independent discovery of truth with use of literacy skills can be called creativity, even if that truth is an old one as was the case with Rama Devi. In this sense, Anita, Darshini and Rama can be truly said to have picked up new literacy skills to discover truths for themselves.

However, a majority (15/20) of the learners seemed to have only a tenuous interest in the TLC because it was not very helpful in their daily lives[33]. Every respondent recognised the need to learn literacy and hence welcomed such efforts on the part of the BGVS rather than the district administration. But, at the same time, they were also constrained by lack of leisure to pursue literacy. Some hard-headed adults affirmed that they 'did not have so much time to waste on what was on offer under government sponsorship'[34]. A general suspicion prevailed among them as to why and for how long the government would be able to sustain their interest. However, the fact that they were still persuaded by TLC workers to join, despite general disaffection with the government, shows that they had their own personal reasons for coming to TLC classes. These interests were created by new situations arising out of general communication needs generated by modern developments in the area. Unlike the tribals of Dumka district in Bihar, where socio-political processes as natural and logical outcomes of democracy have produced the need for political literacy, villagers in Rohtak district are primarily forced by a functional need of literacy necessitated by socio-economic and urban expansion of capitalist development in Haryana. In this sense, the urge to join in TLC, among the adult learners of Deshalpur, arises from a functional awareness about 3Rs, whereas in Nawadih (Dumka), it is an outcome of democratic consciousness of the idea of dialogue, equality and communication with the dominant (mainstream) community in Bihar. The fact that tribals in Dumka questioned the uses of literacy in terms of distinctions between *'akshar pehchan'*

[33] Personal interview and discussion with eleven adult women learners including one male learner in Deshalpur during February 1995. This apart we had several (4-5) group discussions of 2-3 hours each where each time, 3-4 learners including two VTs and a few other interested villagers participated.

[34] Anita Devi speaking on behalf of her fellow-women villagers on 18/02/1995. This was affirmed by two VT who accompanied me throughout my interaction with the learners.

(word recognition) and *'akshar gyan'* (knowledge of words), and that such questions were not heard in Rohtak (Haryana) is testimony to these two levels of social awareness in north India. People in Deshalpur have felt a new need to know the skills of reading and writing and to maintain accounts of their daily trade as necessitated by the fast-growing commercial exchanges of the new market system. With growing commerce and state regulations, they also now need to have, more than ever, knowledge of the transactions required in legal and business matters, in which literacy is the first requisite skill.

Across all responses in personal interviews, group discussion with various groups of learners, and in a participant observation[35] we found that the dominant pattern of communication between the educators and the learners is text-based standard Hindi with heavy emphasis on mechanical and monologic instruction. About 70% of each TLC class-time consists of teaching and learning. This involves mainly a mechanical, monologic instruction on the part of VTs, in how to move the hand in order to write a letter or a word from the primer. First the VT would pronounce a word, spell it and then show it in writing. The learners have to follow the instructions, note the movements of hands and try to write. This is repeated several times until most learners learn to write. Slow learners are left behind and helped to write and read again later in the same manner[36]. The VTs have no adequate training or skill either to make a given text more interesting or to bring in examples from outside the primer, from the life-world of the adult learners. Available teaching aids are generally limited to pencil or chalk, copy or slate and the primers. Sometimes, where there is a school building available, they have in addition, a blackboard. Classes are generally held at somebody's house sitting on floors and the class-size usually ranges from 7 to 15. Learners expect classroom materials and environment to be interesting but since classes are usually held in the late evenings under a few lanterns, it ends up in drudgery after the day's hard-work. VTs are expected by the officials to act as teachers and adult learners as school-pupils in the traditional sense. This implies that classroom-teaching is mechanical, teacher-oriented and primer-based. The learners however expect a lot more than this. They expect the VTs to act as facilitators and good speakers: '*in VTs ko bholane wala aur cheejon ki samajhdaari hona chahiye. ye to bachche hai. phir bi thora hi bahut likhana-padhana sikhaate hain*'[37]. ('These VTs should be good communicators and empathesisers with an understanding of general matters. But they are too young. Still, they

[35] Though we had several personal interviews and group discussions, two class-teachings were also organised on the 09/02/1995 where a total of 6+7= 13 learners and two VTs were present.
[36] Reported by Khajan Singh (VT and Village TLC Coordinator) on 09/02/1995
[37] Srimati Azad Kaur (female learner, 40 years old) on 18/02/1995 in Deshalpur

are able to teach 3Rs a little bit'). The adult learners too understand these limitations of the young and semi-literate VTs. They feel learning is not communicative and participatory but is oriented mechanically to official requirements of written tests given at the end of each primer-lesson.

Still, even within these specific narrow bounds of alphabet learning, when the learners were given a few unfamiliar words from their primers, words like *kshama* (pardon), *bhiksha* (to give), *pratigya* (oath) and *kritagya* (grateful), they were unable to write or pronounce these words[38]. This indicates that a genuinely thoughtful language learning is not sought under the TLC. The main problem with TLC pedagogy is that the language-lessons of the primers draw on a linguistic form which is heavily based on a 'structuralist-essayist' literacy approach[39]. Replacing the learner's language, this approach emphasises a structurally and lexically graded syllabus with mechanical orientation in the presentation and practice of language items. There is neither any oral discussion on the nature of TLC and classroom tasks nor any consideration of differing forms of relevant speech variations. Given the nature of linguistic competency of VTs and the primer-specific instruction, there is no variation in methodology, scope and range of language situations.

Exclusive and explicit concern on grammar and sentence structure without any social appropriateness of language was found to be the essential and main feature of Deshalpur TLC. This shows that the communicative function of grass-roots bilingualism in Hindi available in this village is not part and parcel of the TLC teaching. Instead of focusing on issues of the immediate socio-linguistic situation or using linguistic forms which are characteristic parts of Haryanavi speech, the primer-based classrooms focus on the interactions that the printed text generates between the eyes and the mind of the learner. Since the norms and roles for learning standard Hindi are practically limited to the given words and sentences of the text and its method of presentation, the limited communication that takes place is between one individual learner and the individual VT mediated by a fixed text. Consequently, the language used and learnt in the classroom is the one which is limited to these roles and norms given in the primers rather than contexts of actual social life. Even though the speech expressions marking social relationships, norms and roles in the Haryanavi dialect as well as in the local Hindi are familiar to adult learners, there is no explicit mention of their difference with the written standard Hindi. The primer determines

[38] These words are taken from Haryana TLC Primer, *Jatan*, Part - II, BGVS, Panipat, (undated), 18
[39] see our introductory chapter.

the topic and the questions to be answered. It is also the primer in which all answers are to be sought. All adult learners watch and listen to instructions and repeat them. This is part of the 'structuralist-essayist' form, the official TLC approach which is based primarily on a concern about adult learner's inability to write correct Hindi. This is also evident from learner's inability to transfer their newly learnt 3Rs skills into use while writing a letter or filling in an application form in correct Hindi. They generally concentrate on the structure of language rather than the message or content of the letter or the application. The role of grammar in the structural formation of a sentence is planned in a linear progression based on some preselected words in terms of language structure rather than on message to be conveyed. Thus the overall preoccupation is not with thinking or understanding prompted by a problem-solving discourse but a mechanical struggle in repetitive writing and reading.

Thus most learners had learnt the 3Rs with little confidence. They were hardly able to write or read a few names other than familiar ones. They lacked confidence in what they had learnt and thus were hesitant in talking about their achievement. Many (13/20) had forgotten what they had learnt after 4-5 months of completing their last primer-lessons[40]. Some, like Srimati Azad Kaur and Srimati Rajwanti, declared: '*katti dimag kharab ho raha mera, sab bhool gayee hoon! Jatan lane par kuccha yaad aawega, aise na howe hai*'.[41] (My mood is spoilt, I have forgotten everything! Bring the Primers, then I can recall something, otherwise it is not possible). Note the intimate and casual style of their resignation. They did not say it was 'impossible' to speak about what they had learnt. But due to their lack of confidence, they found themselves needing some help from the primer to articulate their expression about their literacy skills. This is what they meant by the expression - 'it is not possible'. It meant that in absence of the primer, they would not be able to speak about their learning experience. Also, note that Azad and Rajwanti do not care to monitor their speech or utterance. But note here Anita's careful monitoring in her explanation. Anita explained their lack of interest by the obvious reason that the primers and the TLC were not very helpful to them. She explained, 'some learners are fascinated by folk stories, some by stories on household occupational skills, some by farm stories, a few others enjoy travels and tours, and others still like new information and humorous stories in the context of village life. There is certainly not enough of these in the primers given and

[40] When I visited Deshalpur in February 1995, after 4-5 months of last Primer teaching, these learners had forgotten the skills they had learnt. I had the opportunity to talk to them, both in groups as well as individually on different days.

[41] Srimati Azad Kaur and Srimati Rajwanti in a group discussion on 18/02/1995. They uttered these two statements complementing each other.

TLC classrooms which could satisfy their curiosity'[42]. Anita here while explaining the phenomena of reading interests, also cares to monitor her own speech. She uses more formalised contexts like 'some like', 'others still like', etc. to explain the reader's varying interests. Here Anita is positing the existence of a 'learning' and 'curious' self, a part or region which monitors the larger self. This learning self, according to Anita has a evocative force bringing a person to experience their minds working. Critical judgement on a reading interest is possible because some part of the learner's mind or self knows what is going on within him or her, and so the learner can separate the 'useful' from the 'non-useful'. So the influence of an intentional act like organised reading and writing is observed and evaluated. Reading and writing as cultural values towards *vidya grahan* (acquisition of art/skills of learning), *sanskar*, (conscientization) and *gyan* (knowledge) in Indian tradition were, and still are not only of functional importance but also of an ethical significance[43]. Thus reading and writing prompt not only self-monitoring and effective expression of a self but also a moral behaviour consisting of judgement on use- and truth- value of an intentional act. Thus on the part of the learner every aspect of TLC is judged and evaluated from the beginning. Though Anita too belongs to the same community of speakers, and has same social status, her husband's mobility gives her a greater variety of experience in social interactions. When Anita used to respond to us and not to her fellow-women, her speech reflected the norms of what she believed was the articulate and prestige language of the literate groups. When talking to us, most fellow-women used to ask Anita to speak on behalf of them (e.g., *too bol na* - meaning 'you speak'). When asked which lessons had fascinated them the most, some (9/20) like Srimati Rajkumari said, *'abhi itna gyan nahi hua hai ki yah bataun'*[44] (we haven't gained that much knowledge to be able to answer that question). These women still viewed themselves as 'illiterates', and hence they do not try to speak in an articulate way. The same is true of the VTs who consider themselves at best 'semi-literates'.

When the adult learners confessed that they had not learnt anything from the TLC centres, they intended to make it plain that their hope of entering and possibly seeing the print-world was thwarted. Srimati Rajkumari, the oldest of all the women-learners

[42] Anita Devi was the most proficient of all learners and she preferred to join us in 3-4 group meetings of 3-4 persons each. This was explained by her on the 18th of February, 1995

[43] Anita Devi here referred to some cultural categories which provided the value of learning, which according to her, most learners, though 'illiterate' are aware of these guiding values and interests.

[44] Srimati Rajkumari (48 years old woman) in an interview-cum-group discussion on 17/02/1995. In every group discussion, statements uttered by one were generally, also repeated by others with minor changes in the use of verbs and a few other words.

expressed her disappointment by saying: 'perhaps, reading and writing is not in my fate, though I really tried. ... it wasn't interesting. ... because it is really not in my *kismat* (fate). We didn't read earlier (in childhood), now it seems we will not be able to learn any more' (at this old age)[45]. We note here that in her utterance, Rajkumari alternates between two different norms of speeches and beliefs, one in the nature of a generalized belief and the other in the nature of her own personal feeling. She does not dare to introspect much her own feelings on a new event in her life, e.g., the experience about teaching and learning. She is trapped in two different worlds of experience and beliefs. The implied contrasts is between her own superficial rationality which exhibits in a loose logic with words like 'because' and 'really', and the implied skepticism which is enforced by her previous belief that she cannot learn. Her aging-identity pushes her with 'logic of fate' towards solidarity with her old fellow-women saying 'this is how we really feel'. This sort of 'contextualization signals essentially tell the hearer what sort of person the speaker takes (or wants) the hearer to be (for this particular communication), what sort of person the speaker takes herself to be (for this communication) and what the speaker assumes the world (of things, ideas, and people) to be like (for this communication)'[46].

This is evident from respondents' attitude exemplified in their analysis of their experience in literacy learning. Every learner-respondent in Deshalpur village, regardless of her social status, was found to use variations in the use of words and verbs (as in Azad Kaur and Rajwanti's case) like, *'padhi hoon'*, *'padh li'* and *'padhi thi'*, (all generally meaning 'to have read') to distinguish less formal, intimate styles from more formal, public (as in Anita's case) like, *'haan, maine yah "Jatan" padha li hai'* (yes, I have read this primer). 'However, the degree to which one uses the less prestigious form in more casual styles also marks one's membership in and solidarity with one's local social group(s)'[47]. As some Deshalpur adult learners like Anita and Darshini Devi, enter more mobile, formal public life, they want to achieve respect and status, defined by the norms of wider interactive language. Thus they are partly more successful in language learning in imitating prestigious forms. In the case of Dumka tribal adult learners Hindi is less a 'prestigious' form and more a 'dominant' form. Most adult learners, both in tribal Bihar and Haryana peasantry who do not see a possibility for social mobility and have to return to their local, informal situations, tend to identify with and achieve solidarity with their own community,

[45] Srimati Rajkumari in a group discussion on 17/02/1995
[46] James Paul Gee (1996), Social Linguistics and Literacies, 98
[47] Gee, op.cit., 92-93

whose values and norms they are already familiar with. However, in case of intermediate situations like that of Srimati Somwati, a Scheduled Caste (SC) woman in Deshalpur village working as a sweeper in the nearby school, the individual was torn between the two identities, and was trying to seek a satisfying balance[48].

Somwati began as a 'learner' in the 3Rs, then she started teaching fellow-women and children from her own community. Social interaction of SC (untouchable) women like Somwati is limited to her own caste-community and her work at school, rather than the wider village. As a result she had less understanding of what we were saying to her; she was torn between two different kinds of speech-norms - 'hers' and 'ours'. When we made her feel empowered and free to speak anything and anyway she liked, she affirmed that she could speak and communicate her ideas but in her own speech-style. Though Somwati had learnt to read and write and was able to teach other fellow-women, she was ambivalent about her place in the society. Although she had become a 'literate' or a 'semi-literate', she was still an 'untouchable'. 'Untouchables' in Deshalpur, like the tribals in Dumka, are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, have a special, stigmatized place as the 'other' which defines the 'self' of the high-caste members such as the Jats and the Brahmins. As a neo-literate, with semi-literate skills in the dominant speech form, she had to accept the distance between 'her' own norms of speech and that of the higher-castes. It was this gap which was also weakening her motivation as she often complained that though she could teach her fellow-women, she could not explain to them 'anything' and had to repeat a particular 'thing' several times[49]. Despite her interest in teaching and learning, she had not been able to master the skills simply because in her case, TLC pedagogical practices appeared to maintain a chasm between her lived experience in the village and the life presented in the TLC primers. Neither the TLC practices nor the everyday village life gave her an 'equal status', a dialogical situation in conversation where she could as a potential respondent. In this sense, for most women learners in Deshalpur, TLC too, has appeared to institute a fundamental break between 'what form of language is worth learning' and 'the way language is actually taught'. Learners like Rajkumari and Somwati do not feel empowered to contribute to, or participate in the course, content and norms of everyday TLC interactions. Thus we find that it is mainly the norms (context) of speech or language of interaction as well as the 'psychic mobility' in terms of change in individual identity

[48] Personal interview-cum-discussion with Srimati Somawati (27 years old SC women) on 15/02/1995.
[49] Srimati Somwati in a conversation with us (me and the accompanying VT, Khajan Singh) on 15/02/1995

coupled with a capacity to foresee and identify with social and economic changes, which determine the final outcomes of a literacy initiative.

The most important failure of TLC organisers, particularly of the BGVS officials, is the failure to evaluate the performance of the campaign, to reflect on the actions they had planned and taken, both when they have been effective, and especially when they failed. Though visible at the district level and sub-divisional level meetings of PCs and SPCs, this process of assessment is completely missing at the village level. In this sense, BGVS centres, like other TLC centres under district administration (both in Bihar and Haryana), did not go to the root of the relationship between literacy, pedagogy and learning. At some places, like Nellore in Andhra Pradesh with its anti-liquor movement, and Dhanbad in Bihar with its anti-extortionist struggle, these voluntary organisations have carried their target-groups more in the direction of political action, rather than confining themselves to their specific task of literacy training. To be successful, literacy campaigns do not necessarily have to be oriented towards political action. There is an existing uneasy relationship between government bureaucracy and the voluntary organisations, where each is suspicious of the other. The bureaucracy is generally suspicious of allowing voluntary organisations like the BGVS too much freedom, for fear that these might become more political than pedagogical. On the other hand, the voluntary organisations consider the bureaucracy to be generally indifferent, corrupt, arrogant and lethargic, or at best, followers of a policy of tokenism.

Field observations about huge rallies, numerous public and group meetings, show that TLC under the BGVS (in the states including Bihar and Haryana) had the potential of acquiring a popular activity on the national level, creating public concern about literacy and education. Using its national network, BGVS is in a position to mobilise a national will for mass literacy, represented by groups of teachers, volunteers, community workers, sympathetic activists from various parties and of course by adult learners. Of course, this first requires development of a sufficient amount of literacy skills, discursive etiquette and restraint among its own members. They could use a democratic strategy using popular language for a nation-wide discussion and consensus on issues concerning mass literacy. In a few districts, like Nellore and Dhanbad, neo-literates did forge mass political agitation and establish dialogue with the government and local administration[50]. The continuous rhetoric of the higher levels of government has now at least made it difficult for the district

[50] Anita Dighe (1995), 'Women's Literacy and Empowerment: The Nellore Experience', ASPBAE Courier No. 61; and Pamela Phillpose (1994), 'Learning to Cope', Expression, Indian Expression, September 4

administration to abdicate its responsibility in matters of mass public concern. Though lack of political will in support for the concerns and activities of the TLC has been the most disturbing feature of this campaign in the Hindi speaking states, our own experience in Bihar and Haryana suggests that lack of political will is not necessarily a lack of national concern. Everywhere, adult learners, volunteers and teachers (including some academics, researchers, media persons as well as some government officials) are found to be actively concerned about the practices of TLC and their successes. This suggests that there is already in existence a national interest in literacy, though not mobilised properly. The problem with BGVS leadership is that it is not only badly supported by the district administration but that it too failed to draw on the lessons of history. It failed to take cognizance of previous failures and successes and adopt popular methods. Though the district administration has the power to manipulate and control, still the BGVS with its nation-wide network, could spearhead a national movement representing and articulating a national will if they have the correct perspective.

The BGVS people too, instead of building up trust among local people through active participation, have largely depended on directives, pronouncements and monologues communicated from top officials. They too have failed to institutionalise a discursive culture and the idea of dialogue at the local level. Some dedicated BGVS functionaries who have gone closer to the people, have used a personal form of mass communication but not on forms of 'problem-solving' group activity and discursive practices. BGVS too has missed out on the true participation of adult learners. It has invited people to share BGVS perceptions, rather than allowing them to offer their own opinions and ideas, or giving them some opportunity to make decisions or recommendations. It is to be noted that BGVS as a voluntary organisation has an ad-hoc existence, temporarily assisted by government funds, and has a less rigid hierarchy. Secondly, since its membership is generally on a voluntary basis, with a few on a salary or government deputation service, it is at present less likely to fall prey to bureaucratism. At least until now, it has not got sufficient political power to become a self-indulgent or a power-greedy organisation. Although BGVS enjoys a reputation as a social institution of voluntarism, cooperation and democratic participation, so far it has been unable to forge a self-sustaining 'participative' culture.

The meetings of district and prefecture level BGVS officials in Rohtak (as well as Dhanbad and Madhubani) showed quite an impressive amount of democratic participation among its cadres. It was characterised by cooperation, consultation, informality, debate and commitment, probably because they were not bound by any permanent tie of political or

administrative power. Free from power pursuits, the members seemed to be interested in their work and task-group solidarity. Without institutionalization of democratic participation, power appears to corrupt its wielders. BGVS meetings appeared to satisfy the working of democratic principles at the upper and middle levels of its organisation. We attended three of their regular review-meetings, and observed that they discussed and shared the local experiences of TLC implementation. They analysed the fall-outs of their own strategies and their successes. BGVS meetings at higher levels, e.g., Rohtak District Headquarters and Bahadurgarh Sub-divisional Office, unlike the government officials' meetings, did review accounts of local operational problems not with a bureaucratic detachment but passionately and comprehensively. They considered and reviewed all the broader aspects of various problems, e.g., psychological, political, social, infrastructural and financial. Not all the PCs and SPCs seemed to be actively participating, for reasons best known to them. They appeared to be cynical in discussing strategies against political apathy and the attitudes of local administrators[51]. The BGVS functionaries generally listened to others if any member had something to say, but, as far as major decisions were concerned, BGVS meetings too were characterised by a 'top-down' approach. Decisions generally came from the top positions of each layer of the plan production team. The BGVS leaders commanded some authority not because of their official position but because of their leadership skills and intellectualism. Nevertheless, the BGVS leaders too have not brought their fellow members to learn and share in their task of leadership. That is, if there was a need to debate on a major issue, they would not allow the lower staffs to formally organise such a discussion on their own. For example, over the question of preparation of reading materials for the learners, there seemed to exist two contending views among groups of PCs, SPCs and VTs. Volunteers at the lower levels including the adult learners were not allowed to have any formal discussion on the matter. This was discussed only once at the district level. In this meeting, as reported by one of the SPCs,[52] one group asserted confidence in having an expert group of writers prepare the primers, the other group insisted on contributions from all interested members from each village. Without, however, allowing the members to discuss the issue, the decision on this highly significant matter was taken by top office bearers who, for fear of disapproval by the

[51] In an informal conversation, few of the SPCs who attended the meeting on 16/02/1995 at Bahadurgarh, said, 'why should we unnecessarily burden ourselves, when there is not much encouragement or recognition of such efforts, we do it as much things are possible'.

[52] Reported by Kuldeep Joon (SPC) on very first day (02/02/1995) of my arrival in Shahpur (Rohtak)

district administration and of stepping outside the State Resource Centre (SRC) monopoly, decided in favour of a centralised group of expert writers.

Avoidance of public debate and bureaucratic consensus only enhances the vulnerability of subordinate grass-roots mass organisations like the BGVS, which are dependent on local voluntarism for their day-to-day functioning. It ultimately undermines the group's dynamics, dampening their member's spirits and the overall purpose of mass literacy. There would always be some disaffected groups making destructive criticism. Hence it is much better to institutionalise a participatory culture and sharing of leadership tasks which will reduce intrigues and channelise individual energy and initiative. If the institutions of adult education do not allow their members and intermediary leaders to engage in open and candid expression of opinions and facts, no new and acceptable norms of group interaction and of language-learning will emerge. Neither will there emerge a participatory and communicative culture.

As mentioned before, the success of the TLC under the BGVS leadership is also constrained by an uneasy relation with the district administration. The district administration which is a permanent body and all too powerful, has all the resources and ultimate decisions in its own hands. All projects (including adult literacy and community school projects for villages) in a district have to be submitted to the District Collector (DC) for approval. All financial sanctions made for such projects are under the direct control of the DC. Though in principle these projects are supposed to be under an autonomous voluntary organisation, in reality, they are not. In fact, these VOs are registered with the district administration as independent bodies whose chief executive head is the DC, under whom some other senior person carries out the day-to-day functions. It is the DC who must finally approve each and every major decision, particularly the one concerning finances. The project proposal is finally submitted by the DC to the state government and the state government puts up all the district proposals to the national government. Finances are delivered in a reverse way to the lower offices for their implementation. BGVS as a new VO was established in August 1989 by the central government both as an 'informal arm of the NLM' and as people's national 'network to provide grass-roots support to total literacy campaigns'[53]. It has developed an extensive national network with some committed activists and a small group of intellectuals but it has become totally subservient to NLM rather than working for literacy on its own. Though the bureaucracy at the national and

[53] 'Perspectives, Achievements, Tasks, ... & Dreams' (undated), a BGVS publication, 31 and M.P. Parmeswaran (1992), 'The BGVS - What it is and What it is not', The Turning Point, NLM, 7

state level gives BGVS some autonomy and respect, at the district level it completely dominates and controls its activities.

There is a lot of literature on the functioning of bureaucracy in India, particularly on its extra-constitutional privileges and domination at various levels, its corruption, self-indulgence, arrogance and indifference towards ordinary people[54]. The district-level bureaucracy is always suspicious and jealous of large voluntary organisations such as the BGVS whose relatively broad popularity and sincerity are seen as a potential threat, undermining government authority. In such a situation, when a politically powerless voluntary organisation seeks cooperation from the district administration they are often completely ignored[55]. Instead, the district administration which stands on a solid platform of power is whimsical in its treatment of their voluntary efforts. This was particularly evident in a meeting we observed at the district level where the DC addressed the TLC (BGVS) group in an authoritarian style, scolding them for their failures in blatant disregard of their dedication [56]. His main accusation against the BGVS officials-in-charge was that they had not covered all the 'illiterates' even in a period of two years and that they had not maintained an updated record. Unmindful of all the practical limitations and the relative success of the BGVS, he held them responsible for failing to complete the TLC phase, even though in the past the district administration had consistently failed in its attempts to implement various literacy projects. Even at the time, there were other community projects, like the IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme), the JRY (Jawahar Rojgar Yojana for rural self-employment) and the Aganwadi schemes (for expectant mothers), which had been in the hands of the DC for almost a decade, but none of these had been successfully implemented. Unfortunately, the district administration is part of the social groups which want to maintain the status-quo with locally entrenched interests. As opposed to 'decentralisation, devolution, and localisation', they talk of stricter control in the name of 'efficiency' and 'accountability', which allows them to exercise dominance. Scollon and Scollon point out that in a situation 'where each speaker believes the other to be displaying a superior attitude' conflict 'is a natural reaction to this difference in the linkage of dominance and display'[57]. During our field-visit, we found that the 'unduly bossy' nature

[54] For example, see Atul Kohli (1990), Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability ; John Eschverri-Gent (1993), State and the Poor: Public Policy and Political Development in India and the US; Amitva Mukherjee (ed.) (1994), Decentralisation: Panchayat in the Nineties

[55] Reported by almost all BGVS officials in Delhi, Rohtak and the villages we visited in Haryana.

[56] In a formal meeting consisting of all BGVS officials and the Deputy Commissioner at TLC Headquarters (Rohtak), I happened to arrive there at the venue. I was allowed to observe the proceedings. Date not recorded but it was sometime in the third week of February 1995.

[57] Scollon and Scollon (1981), Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication , 16-19

of the district administration has not only led to a serious breakdown in communication between individuals of a task-group, between the public and the administration, but it has also produced miscommunication and distrust among the members of the public and the administration finally resulting in alienation, disaffection and defeatism. In many districts of both Haryana and Bihar, such as Panipat, Jind, Muzaffarpur and Madhepura, it is allegedly the high-handedness of district administration which has created divisions and splits within organisations, undermining the overall unity of purpose of the TLC. S.C. Dube has warned that until educational processes are 'freed from bureaucratism and strengthened by community participation', adult education and primary education programmes in India will remain distant goals[58].

On the whole, the efforts of the BGVS are commendable in terms of sincerity and a consistent concern for taking literacy to the adult population of India; its denunciation of the organisational modalities of the Indian school system; its criticism of the inadequacies, inflexibility and wastage in government efforts towards mass education; and its rejection of a public policy which denies equality of opportunity and marginalises the poorest sections. That is why BGVS's modest successes, in terms of making a few learn the 3Rs, have been quite genuine. But these achievements are tenuous and are very much in danger of regressing due to want of a move from the language of marginalisation to the language of participation. Learners are insecure, because their newly learnt skills are not coordinated with further reading skills of the post-literacy phase. They have not been able seriously to challenge the content and rhetorics of TLC policies and inconsistencies in implementation. As a voluntary organisation involved in a mass movement for literacy, it has failed to forge a 'national will' towards such a change by incorporating interaction and dialogue between individuals and institutions. It has failed both in the political and pedagogical aspects of the mass literacy agenda. On the political side, it has not been able to create discursive traditions, norms and values for institutionalising civil discourse. In literacy education too, it has not been able to create a proper interactive practice. The BGVS can do these things in the proper way if it can lobby the government for substantial autonomy and budgetary allocation so long as the government needs its collaboration. Now, having done our case studies of Bihar and Haryana, we will move to an analysis of the content of the TLC primers, and see how the reading materials have come to affect the language learning and thinking of adult learners.

[58] S.C. Dube (1994), *Shiksha, Samaj Aur Bhavishya* , 117-118

Chapter 6

TLC Hindi Primers: A Content Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION: AIM AND RATIONALE

In chapters 4 and 5 we analysed the pedagogy and ethnography of TLC practices with a focus on the day-to-day activities of organising teaching and learning. We would complement that with an analysis of the reading material given to adult learners. In this chapter we intend to analyse the contents of the TLC primers. As the entire focus of language learning and TLC is centred on these primers[1], we need to study the internal structure of these texts - the linguistic methods they use, and the messages, symbols and values they convey to adult learners. Thus in the present chapter, we shall analyse the ways the content of the TLC literacy primers is presented, the kind of language used, the discourse pattern of messages and meanings, and also how they have been received by readers. As Scollon and Scollon have pointed out, the grammatical system facilitates the structural presentation of a message but it is only through the discourse pattern that we can interpret it[2]. By analysing their discourse patterns, we finally want to examine their social, cultural and political usefulness for learners.

Language lessons provide a concrete area for a critical and objective analysis of the tools and values offered to adult learners. The lessons in TLC primers focus on elementary 3Rs within a limited range of subject matter: functional literacy coupled with some prescriptive concerns about population control, environment conservation, national integration, etc.. These are the subjects or themes under the TLC guidelines that each State Resource Centre (SRC) is supposed to offer to its adult learners; the guidelines are provided by the Directorate of Education (DAE) in New Delhi. We shall try to understand why SRC officials or writers (in Patna and in Rohtak) have chosen some themes and ignored others, bearing in mind that it is the SRC in each province which is finally responsible for preparing the reading materials. Therefore, we shall also do a comparative content analysis of TLC primers produced in Bihar and Haryana. Each TLC centre or village has a set of three primers prescribed for its beginners. Our study will be limited to an analysis of six TLC primers in the Hindi language prescribed for adult learners of the two villages we have studied. These primers mainly focus on basic language learning; they

[1] see Appendix 1, para ix

[2] Scollon and Scollon (1981), Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication , 12

also contain some exercises in rudimentary arithmetic at the end of each lesson. We shall concentrate only on the language texts.

We have said in our introductory chapter that communication is the central feature of every social interaction using a text. According to Halliday (1978), 'a text is the product of infinitely many simultaneous and successive choices in meaning' which is realized in a 'lexicogrammatical structure' called "wording" or a 'text'[3]. The 'environment of the text', according to Halliday, is the 'context' or an 'instance of a social context', or a '*situation type*'. The meaning potential that is characteristic of a text or a situation type in question can be realized in many ways. Content or text analysis is the means by which we can probe into the explicit and hidden meanings and messages contained in a textbook. According to Krishna Kumar, 'it is no easy job to decode the socialization agenda of literacy primers and other materials. Not that primers themselves are difficult. The problem lies in the fact that they are deceptively simple. Behind the single sentence or single episode lessons of the typical primer is hidden a whole world of power relations'[4]. Knowledge and power are mutually related, and are distributed in the structure of content through various discursive formations. Texts themselves contain alternative possibilities of readings involving resistance, co-optation and critique on the part of readers. However, it is only through content analysis that a proper and full reading of these texts can be done. A 'content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from texts. These inferences are about the sender(s) of the message, the message itself, or the audience of the message. The rules of this inferential process vary with the theoretical and substantive interests of the investigator'[5]. As we are interested in literacy and adult education, we shall analyse differences in the communication effect of the content, compare the "levels" of communication, audit communication content against TLC/NLM objectives, identify the intentions and other characteristics of the communicator (i.e. the SRC officials), determine the psychological effect on adult learners, describe their attitudinal and behavioural responses, and finally, relate our analysis to the context of culture, language and power relations in which adult learners live their life[6].

Before we go into actual content analysis, we provide a brief account of the guidelines or 'norms and approaches' that have been set by the DAE for the preparation of reading materials. These norms will provide us a standard basis for comparison of various

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[3] M. Halliday (1978), Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning , 125
[4] Krishna Kumar (1989), Social character of learning , 24
[5] Robert Philip Weber (1990), Basic Content Analysis , 9
[6] Robert Philip Weber has enumerated some of these purposes of a content analysis, ibid.

"levels" in communication and also audit differences in communication content of these primers. The DAE has noted that these guidelines are neither 'prescriptive nor exhaustive'[7]. We reproduce the relevant extracts from these guidelines:

Approach

One of the basic issues in writing for neo-literates relates to selection of suitable topics, content, language, illustration, etc., which would arouse interest in a learner to read a book. This requires an intimate and objective understanding of the background and environment of the neo-literates. ... One way of obtaining necessary information is through discussion and dialogue with neo-literates. It would be more fruitful if the writer stays with them for some time to understand their lives and environment, through participatory techniques. If this is not possible, recorded data and information about the prospective readers should be fully utilised.

(a) ... A neo-literate can discriminate between the right from the wrong, the important from the unimportant and the immediate from the remote. He is endowed with a fairly reasonable degree of reasoning and ratiocination. This distinguishes the neo-literate from the children. Therefore, sermonising and adopting a patronising attitude would only distance them ...

(b) ... the material should enable the neo-literate to perceive and analyse the generative sources of their disadvantage, equip themselves with such tools and techniques which could liberate them from their deprivation and exploitation.

(c) Some sections of the society have remained subjugated so long that they have lost their cultural identity. The books should make them aware of their cultural heritage.

(d) The books should inform the people about developmental and welfare programmes ... alleviate poverty, remove inequalities ... practical skills ...

(e) ... they should also develop among readers a questioning attitude towards such aspects of the system which harbour narrow-mindedness, blind belief ... Books should help to develop a critical faculty and scientific temper ...

(f) Cultural activities ... books which could be read just for pleasure and joy ... develop a taste for reading.

(g) Any idea or information presented should be direct and clear. ...

(h) The neo-literate books should help the readers in reinforcing literacy skills already acquired, in its continuation and application, leading to a stage of self-reliance.

... The factors which have to be controlled in grading the books are thematic content, linguistic content, presentation ... Linguistic factor assumes very great importance in the case of books for adult neo-literates. ...[8]

[7] Compendium of Instructions on NLM, Vol. II, D/O Education (1992), 152-153
[8] ibid.

We find that the above guidelines use a number of Freirean concepts and terms, such as collection of necessary information through discussion and dialogue with neo-literates, grading of thematic and linguistic content according to the generative sources of people's disadvantages, etc.. However, these concepts are not clarified or explained either here or anywhere else in any one of the TLC documents although they have specific meanings in the Freirean scheme. The investigation and discussion of these themes require keen sensitivity and special methodological consideration on the part of investigators, writers and educators. 'The investigation of ... people's "thematic universe" - the complex of their "generative themes" - (should) inaugurate the dialogue of education as the practice of freedom. The methodology of that investigation must likewise be dialogical, providing the opportunity both to discover generative themes and to stimulate people's awareness in regard to these themes. Consistent with the liberating purpose of dialogical education, the object of the investigation is not men (as if men were anatomical fragments), but rather the thought-language men use to refer reality, the levels at which they perceive that reality, and their view of the world, which is the source of their generative themes'[9]. In contrast to the Freirean emphasis, the TLC guidelines have not provided any clear direction or definition to the concept of education. The guidelines also show some inconsistencies. For example, in the paragraph (d) it does not explain how books or primers can alleviate poverty or remove inequality. Is it through prescription or awareness through critical enquiry and dialogue? In para (c) it is not clear who are the people who have lost their identity, how they have lost their identity, in what sense their identity is lost, and what does identity actually mean in a particular context.

Apart from these, the linguistic norm for preparation of primers provides that they 'should be written in the standard language of the state', but they could also be written in the more 'widely used dialects'[10]. The Bihar and Haryana primers are mainly written in the standard Hindi (i.e. *Khariboli* form), though respective State Resource Centres (SRCs) have also produced sets of primers in two other languages, namely Santhali (a tribal language) and Urdu. Santhali primers are mainly for the tribal southern districts of Bihar whereas Urdu primers are intended for Muslim populations in both the states. In Dumka, though Santhali is the main language of the tribals, the District Officials reported that tribals themselves had opted for Hindi primers. It appears however that officials in all the six districts we visited in Bihar and Haryana had opted for the Hindi language primers for

[9] Paulo Freire (1972), Pedagogy of the Oppressed , 69
[10] Compendium of Instructions on NLM, op.cit., 153

their own practical convenience[11]. However, Hindi primers are different between Bihar and Haryana. They differ not only in terms of text and content but also, there is a big difference in the nature and presentation of their text. This is because they have been prepared by two respective State Resource Centres in Patna and Rohtak. On the basis of communication content and function of language in these primers, which vary remarkably we have classified these primers into two categories. Two different sets of primers come under our review. The classification based on agencies involved can be shown here (Table 1) as sets 'A' and 'B'.

Table 1 : Broad Types (Sets) of Primers

Set 'A' **Primers prepared by Voluntary Agencies**	**Set 'B'** **Primers prepared solely by State Agencies**
BIHAR BGVS Dhanbad district only	SRC BIHAR Dumka district and other 14 districts
HARYANA BGVS Rohtak district and 6-7 other districts	SRC HARYANA Yamunanagar district and 2-3 more districts

2. CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TWO SETS OF PRIMERS (SRC & BGVS)

(A) THE SRC PRIMERS

We begin our analysis with a summary account of lessons in each set of primers. In three of the SRC (Bihar) primers there are 27 (9+9+9) language lessons along with practice exercises in comprehension and elementary arithmetic at the end. Most of these lessons follow a 'structuralist-essayist' literacy method where 'form' and 'structure' rather than 'function' and 'communication' are central to the given 'text'. Language-learning is introduced as discrete, decontextualised skills in letters, words and passage formation, and though arranged in a lexico-grammatical fashion, it is linear or additive in method[12]. For example, the content of all the first 4-5 lessons is arranged in a linear or additive way, i.e. words with letters, vowels and consonants added to one another in various combinations are presented in a syllabic form. Likewise more words, sentences and passages are introduced at later stages. For example, Lesson 1 (of Bihar SRC Primer I) starts with the word - मकान - MAKAAN (meaning a house or a building) which is written like this: म क ा न (M-A - K-AA - NA). Here both 'a' and 'aa' are vowels but 'a' has a short stretch in

[11] In almost every meeting with tribal adult learners in Dumka (during November-December 1994), we were told that district officials had not conducted any survey for knowing their choice for languages.

[12] see RN Srivastava (1995), Applied Linguistics , 120-121; Scollon and Scollon (1981), 41-49

its pronunciation, and 'aa' has a long stretch. Here both are introduced in their syllabic form rather than in their independent form. Then other words and short phrases are introduced in the same manner. These are isolated words formed by addition, subtraction of permutation, e.g., कम - *kam* (less), काम - *kaam* (work), कमा - *kama* (earn), नाम - *naam* (name), कान - *kaan* (ear), नमक - *namak* (salt), काका का मकान - *kaakaa ka makaan* (uncle's house), मन का मान - *man ka maan* (respect your feelings), काका का मान - *kaakaa ka maan* (respect your uncle), etc. Though the words are simple, yet the emphasis is on direct introduction of an abstract writing similar to learning a foreign language. Learners are supposed to learn skills in a hierarchical progression from letters to words, from words to sentences and then go on to paragraph writing. This approach assumes that the 'process of language-learning is additive and linear', that language is 'learned structure by structure, form by form, word by word, proceeding from simple to the more complex'[13].

Social linguists have found this approach to be inadequate on many counts: first, 'it is *situationally random*'. Secondly, in this method the formal linguistic features and structures dominate over other concerns and/or functions, which the learners have to practice or drill in isolation. At the end, the learner does 'not know how and when to use them' and thus remains 'tongue-tied when occasions for the use of language arise'. Thirdly, 'it makes teaching atomistic' i.e. teaching of sound structure, vocabulary and grammar, all are seen as distinct and separate stages of language-learning[14]. Its emphasis is on 'bit by bit', on 'form' rather than on 'communication' as a whole, on 'verbal semiotic' rather than 'social semiotic'[15]. There is no TLC guideline for the volunteer teachers (VTs) which suggests that words or expressions from daily-life, outside the primers can be introduced to learners, and then writing can be explained as a sign-system for verbal expressions. In the first six lessons, we do not find words or examples which can be said to constitute a 'generative word' or a 'generative theme' on which 'illiterates' do feel like speaking on their own and for long. Learners and VTs as beginners of language learning do not know and feel like entering into a discussion on these words, so that first they start identifying the patterns and rules in articulation of a sentence and an argument, and then proceed to learn its presentation in writing. The words introduced here are not

[13] Srivastava (1995), 121

[14] ibid.

[15] Semiotics is concerned with study of signs and symbols, especially the relations between written or spoken signs and their referents in the physical world or the world of ideas. Verbal semiotics tends to emphasize grammatical aspects of linguistic rules but social semiotics attest to cultural meanings.

'generative themes' in the Freirean sense of the concept which constitute not only a thematic totality in themselves but also provide sufficient opportunity for exercise in cognition, expression and communication through discursive engagement. The nature of the content of the remaining lessons in the three SRC primers are summarised below:

Primer I, Lesson 7 is a short passage titled 'Our Indian nation' where the words or statements used focus on messages like, 'we are proud of our country', or 'our country has everything such as rivers, canals, forests, mines, factories and other resources' and 'still there is scarcity' because 'everywhere there is a crowd'[16]. The reason suggested for this scarcity is over-population, of which Kamala and Lakhan (the two literate characters in each of the primer lessons) 'are sadly aware'. The implicit blame is on 'illiterates' who are unaware of various problems caused by over-population. This is in line with the official ridicule towards 'illiterates' in general, when they are criticised for having a large family. The context presented for this message about family-planning in the lesson is of a general and apparently direct logical relationship between abundance and scarcity and the size of population in the country. Though only partly true, the argument is simply too general and hence unlikely to be convincing to adults. In fact, there is no argument here. It simply states this relationship as a validated truth and suggests that over-population is the main cause of economic hardship. This is suggested by the opening statement about 'pride of our country' and the negation of this pride by 'sad things' about which literate villagers like Kamala and Lakhan are aware. We are not opposed to a discussion about over-population and the necessity of family-planning. But the text exemplifies a strong sense of both elitism and paternalism, and as we shall see in the following lessons, it locates evil and nuisance more consistently among the poor and the 'illiterate'. The text absolutizes the ignorance possessed by 'illiterates'. It merely sloganizes to 'illiterates' about the issues under consideration without involving them in a discussion or dialogue on the issue. It does not discuss at all why there is first a problem of overpopulation and why there is scarcity despite abundance; and in what way overpopulation, scarcity and abundance are related to the consumption habits of various groups divided into rich and poor. The 'text' does not fit well with any of the NLM guidelines [particularly paras (a), (e) and (g)] presented earlier. In fact, the text goes against the NLM guideline.

Lesson 8 contains presentations of a few loose and unconnected statements. These contain didactic messages with an open appeal to make *panchayati raj* (local self-

[16] *Hamaari Kitaab, Praveshika Bhag - 1*, (1994), Deepaytan, Patna, 41-46

government) institutions functional[17]. The ideal for participating in such institutions is symbolized by an educated lady called Kamala who is also the village-chief. The message is presented in the following way: Kamala 'treats everybody as equals', 'fights for the people's rights', 'talks about social progress', 'administration too listens to her'. There is also an explicit message that 'people must respect village-chiefs like her'. The 'text' presents as well as demands ideal behaviour rather than talking about the complexities of running an actual *panchayat*. Its emphasis is on political and social quietism, and it presents participation in village-*panchayats* as unproblematic. Thus the text becomes too obviously prescriptive, which, for adult people, becomes boring if repeated several times. Also unconvincing is the role of Kamala, the 'woman' protagonist who is shown to be successfully carrying out all her duties and implementing modern political ideas. Although women's participation is rare in practice, the text evidently seeks to empower its women readers with a suggestive idea of public participation and leadership, but it fails to present realistically the problems that can be faced by them in responsible public positions.

It is worth comparing the SRC texts with Shrilal Shukla's novel *Raag Darbari* (1968) in which he vividly describes the real-life and grass-roots politics in a north Indian village in Uttar Pradesh[18]. In this novel, Shrilal Shukla describes with moving imagery how the three main planks of village development, institutions of local-self government, the cooperative movement and educational self-management, launched in India during the late fifties and the early sixties (and which continue till date) are manipulated and controlled by dominant castes. According to him, much of village politics is now dominated by petty interests, factionalism, nepotism and behind-the-scenes manipulation[19]. According to its translator Gillian Wright, *Raag Darbari* 'gives an absolutely correct description of village politics and the working of government machinery', and it does so by satirizing 'the irrelevance of colonial bureaucracy to the common man, its inefficiency and close connections with politicians'[20]. Compared to the language and diction of *Raag Darbari*, the language-texts in the SRC primers do not depict the reality of village life in a manner likely to appear credible to adult learners. The SRC text depicts only an official, middle-class view of what public attitudes villagers should adopt towards government-initiated projects and machinery. However, the text gives a lot of space to idealise Kamala as a genuine *Sarpanch* (village-chief). It idealizes her role and

[17] *Hamaari Kitaab, Praveshika Bhag - 1*, 47-52

[18] Shrilal Shukla (1968), *Raag Darbari* (a novel in Hindi and winner of highly prized Sahitya Akademi Award in 1970), translated into English by Gillian Wright (1992)

[19] see Gillian Wright's Introduction to *Raag Darbari* (novel), ibid.

[20] ibid.

concern for the 'development' of the village. Obviously, in the context of other lessons, 'development' here implies government projects on 'immunisation', 'population-control', 'tree-plantation' and such things. The lesson ends with a sudden twist with a moral message that 'good villagers do not take dowry and do not believe in caste'. Here again, the text goes against norms set under NLM. Lesson 9, titled 'Come, Together We will March Ahead', centres on the need to create a new society, by breaking the walls of 'discrimination' and strengthening unity and compassion (*mamata*). The end message is to strengthen pride in the mother-country India. It says nothing about the constitutional and political nature of the relationship between citizens and the mother-country.

The Bihar SRC Primer, Part II, Lesson 1 begins with a direct message on hygiene and cleanliness in categorical sentences of do's and don'ts[21]. Lesson 2 is presented as a health prescription, with some useful information on immunisation and vaccination. Lesson 3 concentrates on a 'healthy diet and healthy body' message. Lesson 4 is a text on the need to respect and understand the importance of the national flag. Lesson 5 carries an unrealistic story about the benefits of state-sponsored development. It contains loosely joined statements which though simple are written in standard Hindi, e.g.: मेरे गाँव मे बिजली आयी (electricity has come to my village); बिजली से सिंचाई होगी (electricity will be used for irrigation); फसलो से कमाई होगी (crops will bring income); अब नये-नये रोजगार यहाँ आये (now many new job opportunities have come); सुविधा के हमने साधन अपनाये (we have got the resources and means now); हम काम हमेशा पायेगे (we will now always get jobs); etc. Here, development is symbolized by the sudden arrival of electricity and new irrigation systems in villages, which are supposed to bring about a boom in farm production, industries and employment opportunities. The adult learners in Nawadih village found the story like a dream-situation which inhibited them from serious discussion[22].

Since adult learners find such narratives 'unrealistic', they feel inhibited to talk further about the text of the lesson. Also, since language is the central process by which all subjectivity is produced, the text above tries to construct a subjective identity of its rural readers in terms of official dreams rather than their own desires, not in terms of what they have or can have but in terms of what they cannot have in immediate future. The identification which the text wishes to create here for its reading and desiring subjects is not real. Hence, the text fails to produce an identification necessary for creating a new and dynamic identity for adult learners. Identity presupposes identification with certain specific

[21] Hamaari Kitaab, Praveshika Bhag - 2, (1992), Deepaytan, Patna

[22] Learners in Nawadih village characterised this lesson as a dream and something 'like a politician's promise'. Group discussion with 10-12 tribal adult learners of Nawadih village on 10/12/1994.

characteristics which are essential to the group. The text-image given here fails to valorise necessary 'differences' either through cultural criteria or development criteria of consumption such as clothes, music, food, jobs, skills, language, etc. which are necessary for creating a new identity for adult learners[23]. The adult learners are not just recipients but also communities of response and judgement. They do not find any identification with the group characteristics mentioned in the text. Pointing to this lack of understanding on the part of government officials, Shrilal Shukla sarcastically writes that officials have always tried to make villagers believe 'that India was a farming nation', that villagers were 'basically farmers', and so they 'should farm well and produce more grain'[24]. Shrilal Shukla amuses his readers by saying that it was as if officials were 'gripped by the suspicion that farmers did not want to grow more grain', that they had 'refused to produce more grain out of sheer perversity', and hence 'the solution was to wave speeches at farmers and show them all sorts of attractive pictures'[25]. Here, unlike the TLC text, Shrilal Shukla's novel emphasises the difference between official thinking and villagers' thinking about developmental goals, and is thus able to involve his readers in an amusing reading.

The message in Lesson 6 shifts to the title 'How to keep drinking water clean'. Here an epidemic in a village is attributed to water pollution caused by people who are ignorant and 'illiterate'. Lesson 7 is titled 'Education for Progress', and begins with a scene where 'literate' Prabhu is talking to a few 'illiterate' villagers like Ram Prasad and others who are always involved in some 'dispute over shares in land'. Here, Ram Prasad and others like him are characterised as stupid, quarrelsome and violent, and Prabhu as intelligent and understanding. Prabhu tells Ram Prasad and others that 'one day over-population will ruin the entire country', and that the 'country will be divided' if people keep fighting for their share in everything. He immediately advises them 'to keep to the small family norm' and 'to educate children even on small income'. Finally, Prabhu explains the significance of literacy and education in general for farmers. This is what Prabhu says to them: 'Baldev bhaiya (Baldev, the elder brother) has learnt to read and write a bit. He listens to *Chaupal* (name of a local radio programme on farming skills). He does farming the same way as he learns from the radio programme. He is now fully skilled in farming'[26] as though other peasants do not understand their traditional occupation. In the end, the writer does not forget to add another official message through the mouth of

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[23] Madan Sarup (1994), Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World, 30 and 56
[24] Shrilal Shukla, *Raag Darbari*, 55-56
[25] ibid.,
[26] *Hamaari Kitaab, Praveshika Bhag - 2*, 42

Prabhu: 'Baldev got his children married at the right (proper) age', hence they must understand its significance. This is all that education and literacy means in this lesson. This lesson absolutizes the myth that 'illiterate' people are completely ignorant.

It is interesting to note here how conscious and specific are the themes of discourses or conversation in this lesson. Quarrels, stupidity and violence on the part of 'illiterates', keeping to a small family norm, listening to radio programmes on farming, etc. are the subjects adult learners should discuss and learn about as part of their language-learning task. Neither the 'information structuring system' in the text nor the monologues from Prabhu, contain possibilities for differing opinions about the information provided. The text does not deliberate at all on the meaning and purposes of literacy and education, even though it is titled, 'education for progress'. It does not say anything about the possible stupidities of 'literate' persons. So whatever little is said in the text contrasts directly with the common experience in north India that very few educated persons make good farmers because they become ease-loving and are divorced from practical experience. Rural people find that education does not necessarily make good farmers and that ultimately they have to depend on the experience of non-educated older villagers. Local people feel they too possess knowledge and skills in crop cultivation based on generations of experience, and that modern intensive farming techniques with emphasis on use of inorganic fertilisers, pesticides, hormones and steroids do not necessarily benefit them much[27]. These differences in practices and opinions are not recognised in the text, and hence there is a possibility of the text becoming either vague and misleading or simply sermonising. The point here is that adult farmers or villagers have their own acquired experience which might not be identical to an officially expressed view, and a text can be made more intellectually attractive by incorporating some of these differences.

Coming back to the content of the primer again, Lessons 8 and 9 depict the adult 'illiterates' suffering at the hands of moneylenders and here the Banks and the Twenty-Point Programme of Indira Gandhi are shown to help. Saving-schemes and bank-loans for self-employment have been repeatedly publicised by the government. The only thing officials do not wish to discuss is in what ways daily-wage earners can save money, which is linked to the question of how much money they should be paid for their labour. Since the question of saving is linked to income and expenditure, any statement saying 'save money' is a mere official slogan. It does not convey anything new to the reader either in

[27] Ashis Nandy (ed.) (1988), Science, Hegemony and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity , see particularly chapter 3; also R.H. Richharia (1979), Our Strategy on the Rice Production Front in Madhya Pradesh

terms of language of argument or an idea. People know the conditions and need for saving or borrowing money. Bank-loans for self-employment schemes and development schemes for powerless groups under the Twenty Point Programme have proved failures at the grass-roots level[28].

As primers rise to higher levels, one can find some attempt to introduce greater complexity. There are only a few lessons which introduce questions of history, identity and development related to the community of adult learners. For example, the SRC (Bihar) Primer III begins with a story about Birsa Munda, the popular tribal leader of Ranchi who fought and sacrificed his life in the struggle against colonial injustice, hunger and disease suffered by tribals[29]. The focus is on Birsa's personal sacrifice and the patriotic unity of tribals rather than on his capacity as a leader to understand, articulate and communicate with tribal people about their own problems and aspirations. Birsa Munda is shown as a 'chivalrous' figure and the passage goes to the extent of distorting facts and suggesting that as a leader of tribals, supposedly a backward community, he was mainly inspired by Hindu epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Here the story of Birsa Munda is reproduced (translated):

> Who doesn't know about Birsa Munda! He was born in the Ranchi district of the Chotanagpur region. He was bred and brought up in an ordinary tribal peasant family. He took lessons and inspiration from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He understood the pains (miseries) of tribals. He couldn't bear the hunger and disease suffered by tribals. The British used to oppress people. Birsa raised his voice against their oppression. He united the tribals. United, they fought against the British. He made the British panic. Birsa was wrongly convicted. He was jailed. He kept fighting until his last breath. Fighting against oppression, he died in jail. We should all remember Birsa's sacrifice.

This story is intended mainly for tribal readers but it is also read by non-tribal adult learners. The SRC officials in Patna must have hoped that the text would encourage tribal learners to engage in language learning through discussion and identification with the character of the text. But Birsa Munda, as we discovered, is not considered a hero among the Santhals and the Paharias of Dumka. Though it may be appropriate to introduce legends from outside to enrich the experiences of a local community, the lesson is inappropriate on many counts. Very few in Dumka knew of Birsa at all. He is a hero among tribals of the southern districts in and around Ranchi. Secondly, a few educated

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[28] see Dolly Arora (1995), 'Addressing Welfare in Third World Contexts - Indian Case', EPW, Vol. XXX, No.17, 955-962; S.M. Dev (1995), 'Economic Reforms and the Rural Poor' EPW, Vol. XXX, No. 33, 2085-2088; A.N. Sharma (1995), 'Political Economy of Poverty in Bihar', EPW, Vol. XXX, Nos. 41&42, 2587-2602; *Raag Darbari*, op. cit., 57

[29] *Hamaari Kitaab, Praveshika Bhaag - 3*, Deepaytan, Patna (1994)

Santhals and some older members who knew of him in Dumka, found a gap between what was stated in the story and the way the community remembers him. They found many 'distortions' in the story, and regarded it as a non-tribal representation. This is evident from this statement: 'he (Birsa, the tribal leader) took lessons and inspiration from (the great Hindu epics like) the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*'. Thirdly, in the context of spoken and unspoken informations in the text and the existing inequality of relations between the two i.e. the tribal and the non-tribal communities, the statement is seen by tribals as a stereotypically non-tribal comment. It refers to a mainstream, dominant, Hindu-elite view of appropriate behaviour for tribal people and their leaders.

In the existing situation of relations of dominance and subordination between the two communities, such non-tribal expressions appear invasive to the cultural context of tribal community. Expressions of this sort often inhibit the creativity of tribal group's thinking by putting down their sentiment and self-respect, and hurting their cultural understanding. All groups and communities develop their own cultural understanding initially as a solution to their relation with the natural and social world. All communities have their own original solutions, ideas, know-how, technical knowledge, customs of food and religion, values, ideals, language, knowledge of socio-political and economic behaviour, methods in decision-making, etc., to regulate their individual and collective behaviour. It is on this basis in culture that communities satisfy their fundamental needs. Cultural change occurs in complex ways as communities or individuals invent new ways of satisfying their needs and revise their original thinking. Cultural change may occur also through contact, aggression and conflict with other cultures, due to their own economic and technological requirements, or migration taking place between communities. It is true that isolated groups like tribals have remained less developed for years, but nowadays, with opportunity for mobility and change, they too are changing fast. The above text ignores these historical and cultural factors of tribal dynamics, and imposes a subtle method of narrativisation for cultural invasion. 'Whether urbane or harsh, cultural invasion is thus always an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture, who lose their originality or face the threat of losing it'[30].

Seen in terms of the history of Hindu or Christian cultural invasions upon the tribal groups in Bihar, this sort of expression makes the ideology or the world-views of these two dominant communities into the author of the process of tribal cultural change. In the process of writing about cultural change for tribal communities, the tribals become mere

[30] Freire (1972), 121

objects and receivers. The writers write, and tribals who read it are assumed to follow it by heart. In the last analysis, this sort of cultural invasion can be said to be a form of economic and political domination because its success requires that tribals be convinced of their intrinsic inferiority and easily succumb to the ideals of the texts. It is for this reason that the text disguises the relationship of domination between the tribal and non-tribal communities in an appeal to maintain tribal patriotism for the sake of national unity. For both the tribal and non-tribal readers, the utterance assumes that tribals are not only different people but also inferior, less developed communities, since in the past, their leaders have been generally influenced by Hinduism, which is a superior and more advanced creed. It also suggests that less developed people like tribals should follow the more developed communities rather than work independently or in mutual trust and cooperation. This lack of space for negotiation in meaning-making produces a gap between communities. It thus breaks not only the communication between the text and the reader but also enhances mutual suspicion and chances of miscommunication between these groups. Most tribal learners disliked the story. One tribal VT respondent said: 'we didn't feel like discussing the text-story over and again'; another VT said: 'we do not recognise Birsa Munda as our leader'; 'it is the Diku (non-tribal) way of thinking that we can easily accept anybody as our leader', said a tribal young woman[31].

These utterances of tribal respondents should not be read merely through their surface meaning or simply in the context of their anger and prejudices alone. We must see them in the context of various old and new patterns of relations into which both tribal educated youth and uneducated adults, as disaffected groups or beneficiaries of standard (Hindi) literacy and education, are entering. Tribal utterances of these sorts may connote both a reception as well as a rejection of certain values, functions and forms of literacy and educational practices. Much depends on individual as well as group experiences, interests and alienation of the tribal learners vis-à-vis culture or text of the dominant Hindi and Hindu community and Christian missionaries. The above utterances in the context of the story of Birsa Munda can clearly be seen in terms of a mutual stereotyping of image, both on the part of tribals and non-tribals, against one another[32]. The non-tribals see tribals as 'illiterate' and backward. Tribals see them as dominant, boastful and patronising. Such a 'stereotyping' between two communities can produce misinterpretation and misrepresentation of an information structure.

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[31] Group discussion with 2 VTs and 7 tribal women learners in Nawadih village (Dumka) on 11/12/1994

[32] Sajal Basu (1994), Jharkhand Movement - Ethnicity and Culture of Silence , 25-27

Differences in the structure of languages used by the two groups were the next most important factor. There are vast differences in vocabulary and the syntactic structure used in SRC texts and that of the tribals' daily speech. The Hindi SRC text uses formal syntactical structure for emphasis in an information structure, whereas tribals often use informal, supporting verb-signs, morphemes such as *'re'*, *'aise'*, *'ke'*, *'the'*, *'hai'*, *'hi'*, etc. for use of emphasis[33]. The rules and norms of formal syntactical structure in Hindi which are generally unfamiliar to tribal learners, create hurdles in the cognition of functional and 'communicative grammar'[34]. It hinders the learning of a language in its functional and communicative significance because of its preoccupation with formal rules, verbal semiotic and structure-dependent semantics. However, despite differences between the Santhali dialect and the tribal-spoken variety of Hindi, we have found little evidence that linguistic differences are the main causes of disaffection, though they are significant factors in miscommunication between the two communities. In fact, the main cause of miscommunication between two unequal speakers or communities is the power relationship visible in the discourse-structure of a text. According to Scollon and Scollon, there are usually three types of power relationships visible in a text or an interaction, namely, 'dominance, display and dependence', and 'each of these has two possibilities - superordinate and subordinate for dominance, spectatorship and exhibitionism for display, and caregiving and petitioning for dependence'[35]. Following Scollon and Scollon, we find that the SRC text displays mainly a superordinate and subordinate relationship characteristic of dominance, for the tribal learners. Although tribals have taken a keen interest in learning the dominant language (e.g. Hindi) to empower themselves, literacy and communicative functions visible in their own lore and songs show a 'consciousness of resentment and rebellion' against the non-tribals (Dikus)[36]. Tribal leaders and intellectuals have started asserting that 'their culture has been attacked and social atmosphere disrupted', assailing the media and non-tribal literate groups who have damaged the participatory nature of their folk culture[37]. Thus, tribal interest in literacy at the time of our field-visit was guided by this consciousness. Hence, unless TLC primers repair this damage by using local genres and the 'polyphonic discursive formations' found within

[33] compare Scollon and Scollon (1981), 29; Sajal Basu (1994), 26
[34] R.N. Srivastava (1995), see Chapter 14, 133-145
[35] Scollon and Scollon (1981), 16
[36] Basu, op.cit., 29-30
[37] ibid.

their bilingual folk "tradition" in an imaginative way to provide alternative perspectives and reflections, they would remain inappropriate[38].

To return to the primer, Lesson 2 in SRC (Bihar) Primer III focuses on 'a neo-literate daughter writing a letter to her mother'. In the letter she describes the benefits of learning the 3R's, which echoes the official view. Lesson 3 focuses on the benefits of growing trees, about which surprisingly, adult people are considered ignorant. This kind of publicity has been in vogue in official circles for the last four to five decades. The story has a straight and simple official publicity focus guided by compulsions of command from 'above'. Politically they cannot dare to provide a critical and historical account of tree-plantation efforts made by officials earlier, and are left with only one single option, that is, to sermonise repeatedly to the adult learners. Lesson 4 is titled 'Let us now mend our ways', and is truly representative of the entire SRC textual focus. We present the lesson here both in Hindi[39] and in English. The lesson is a poem with a perfunctory rhyme. We stick to a literal translation.

पाठ 4

अब तो गलती ठीक करे

गंदा जल है, गंदी वायु,
कम होती जाती है आयु
दवा नही, है काम नही,
चैन नही, आराम नही ।

एक कमाए, दस खाएँ,
सब भूखे ही रह जाएँ,
कपड़ा और मकान नही,
जीवन में मुस्कान नही ।

दूकानो पर खड़ी कतार,
शोर भयंकर चीख-पुकार ।
लोग चढ़े बस की छत पर,
और डब्बो के भी ऊपर ।

रोजी घटती जाती है,
रोटी बँटती जाती है ।
अब तो गलती ठीक करें,
जीवन में उल्लास भरें ।

मुन्ना हो या मुनिया हो,
दो बच्चो की दुनिया हो ।
वन को हमें बचाना है,
पौधा हमें लगाना है ।

Lesson 4 (English translation)

LET US NOW MEND OUR WAYS

Polluted water, polluted air,
Life (age) becomes short.
No medicine, no work,
No peace, no leisure.

One earns, ten eat,
Everybody remains hungry,
No clothes, no house,
Life remains without smiles.

(Ration) shops have a long queue,
with shouts, cries, and fearful noise.
People board on the bus' tops,
Also above the trains' roof.

Jobs are becoming rare,
Bread has to be shared.
Let us now mend our ways,
Fill our lives with joy.

Whether it is a 'munnaa' or 'muniya' (boy/girl)
Have only two children in this world.
We have to save the forest,
We have to grow plants.

[38] Compare R.N. Srivastava, Bi/Multilingualism (1994), 178
[39] *Hamaari Kitaab, Praveshika Bhag - 3* (Part III) (1994)

The picture drawn above presents only a single and negative aspect of the adult learner's life. Linguistically, though small and simple, the words used here are alien to the adult learner's world. Hence it is difficult for adult learners to make an immediate sense of the text and its sentence-structure. The text has several unfamiliar and unpopular words like '*vayu*', '*jal*', '*van*' '*aayu*', which form part of a Sanskritised-Hindi vocabulary and diction. Its presentation in a poetic form with formal features and a perfunctory rhyme makes the language of the text decontextualised - e.g. *ganda jal hai, gandi vayu, kam hoti jati hai aayu.* It is decontextualised in the sense that initially both the text and the context are obscure. Only in the second and third stanzas does the context become clear by use of attributes which are typical of crowded homes and public utilities used by lower classes and 'illiterate' people. Like all other texts, the above text too uses the standard Hindi norm. This can be better explained in terms of a language continuum. All speech variations within the broad Hindi linguistic region can be represented on a continuum like this :

- local dialect - - - - > - - - - local or popular Hindi - - - - > - - - - standard Hindi -

All variants used by adult learners in north India in daily life reflect norms or speech characteristics which fall somewhere on the left, and are very different from the standard variety which can be placed on the right extreme of this continuum. The above text, like all other texts of SRC primers, uses a standard Hindi norm used mainly in formal transactions in contexts like offices and schools. This standard variety is generally difficult, if not at times almost unintelligible, to speakers of the non-standard variety. In tribal and rural areas where 'social mobility across classes is slow and mass communication media are not highly developed one would expect a wide range of regionally localized dialects and socially-conditioned speech variations[40]. Despite wide variations in their dialects, all speech communities in north India have to encounter a bilingual or a multilingual situation. They have retained some of the elements of their own speech, but have also invented a few others for wider communication through a natural process of codification. This natural process of linguistic codification characteristic of folk bilingualism selects the functional themes and roles from the two interacting speeches, and codifies them in symbols and signs for both simple and complex channels of communication, e.g., the graphic, the pictorial, the auditive, the visual, etc..

The standard norm used by SRC texts is less intelligible because it lacks these bilingual features of 'code-switching' and 'code-mixing'. It lacks elements of 'societal bilingualism' which bridges the communication gaps across different strata in north India.

[40] R.N. Srivastava (1994), 105

The chief advantage of societal bilingualism is that various elements of the two interacting speeches perform different responsibilities. Societal bilingualism facilitates and regulates the use of various dialects and languages in a natural way; it does so mainly by code-switching and code-mixing, and by simplifying and assimilating the differential structures of each language and their communicative functions[41]. An absence of code-switching components in the TLC standard Hindi text means that its language-learning approach lacks the following: (1) a multiple cognitive reorientation, that is, it lacks those multiple verbal codes which arise during the role-differentiation process of various functionally superimposed languages upon a mother-tongue user. (2) It lacks a common semiological and semantic process which is generally characteristic of a close and constant interaction between groups of speech communities in a particular region, i.e. it lacks a simplified version of linguistic structures which emerge as a result of the diffusion of traits across 'genetic' (original) boundaries. (3) As a result of the lack of the previous two elements, it also means that the text does not provide for skills in mutual transference, or skills in mutual adaptability and comprehensibility between the mother-tongue and the superimposed language[42]. In the TLC primers, we do not find any adaptation or diffusion between the standard and the local variety of speeches. Features of languages can be adapted and some traits assimilated into another. For example, Hindi language-learning can be enriched by adding and adapting various distinctive and colourful traits which are expressive of the learners', particularly the tribal learners' language and local environment. In the absence of the above features, use of standard norms of a Sanskritised Hindi diction becomes a deliberate act of prestige and/or cultural power associated with dominant literate social groups in north India[43].

As a discourse strategy, the text of the poem uses 'passives' and 'impersonal' sentences to enforce distance from these problem-scenes in order to highlight them as objective realities. The use of 'passives' is certainly suitable for creating distance between the writer and the reader. In the poem above, each stanza refers to some unspecified person(s) or the addressee (i.e. the adult learners) and addresses the problem of pollution and production of scarcity. In fact, in the last two sentences of the last two stanzas (4&5), the writer directly refers to its readers while stanza three refers to a group of people in general which may or may not include the addressee. The last stanza 5 of the poem characteristically falls under the category of a "directive" speech act. As a "directive"

[41] cf. R.N. Srivastava, (1994), 105
[42] For details see R.N. Srivastava (1994), 106
[43] Krishna Kumar (1991), Political Agenda of Education , 18

speech act, it focuses on an intent to produce some effects through action by the reader while stanza 4 can be categorised as an instance of an "expressive" speech act which simply expresses the writer's socio-psychological attitude towards an existing state of public affairs. It involves value judgment which is liable to biases and misrepresentation on the part of the writer. Thus the combined effect of both the constructions, i.e. the "directive" and the "expressive" speech acts in stanzas 3, 4 and 5 can be regarded as 'sermonising' because they appear to enjoin the reader 'to act as' the writer wishes him to. The implication in each of the stanza-constructions is however that 'something untoward can happen if the addressee does not carry out the suggestion or instruction'[44]. In the first three stanzas, the writer criticises certain states of affairs but in context of the last two stanzas, it becomes clear that he is not only criticising but also blaming the addressee. Everything from pollution to short life-span, unemployment, lack of medicine, peace, leisure, food, clothing, etc. is suggested as an alarming problem created by an ever-growing 'illiterate' population. The text throughout implicitly suggests that ordinary people are involved in indulgence of all sorts of which they are perhaps unaware. Drudgery, disease, ignorance and dogmatism are presented as 'wishful' indulgences. The life of adult 'illiterates' in rural and under-developed areas is characterised by hardship, struggle and survival against odds. The text gives a simplistic account of what is visible on the surface. It does not mention any reason 'why and how' such a situation has come about and who are the people or groups responsible for it. To make the adult learners understand their life-world, this and other kinds of TLC texts hardly demystify or explain the political realities surrounding their daily life of persistent poverty, hunger and disease. These official texts barely mention the numerous wrongs done by officials, elites and the governments, particularly various manipulations at local levels and the public policy failures that have added to their misery and backwardness. Industrial and economic changes, growth in the size of the middle class, unplanned urbanisation and the role of government in these processes are not referred to at all as possible causes. Implicit also is the assumption that 'illiterate' people are really incapable of comprehending the life and social reality around them.

Lesson 5 is a short guide to the immunisation programme. It contains useful information but the information included is presented as complete, as an end in itself rather than as issues in health which require broader discussion of physiological aspects of health and hygiene, family planning, etc. The text resembles a medical leaflet or an

[44] Srivastava (1994), 223

'immunisation chart'. Lesson 6 is a rewritten short passage from the great Hindi novelist and story-writer Prem Chand's famous story *Idgah*. The sense of fun, fineness of description in simple and moving words, the familiar moods and sensitivity of the original have been completely obliterated. Prem Chand's *Idgah* is written in popular Hindustani, picturing an event in the life of a poor Muslim family consisting of an old, ailing grandmother, Amina, and her grandchild, Hamid. It pictures the excitement of the arrival of *'Id'*, the final day of the Islamic *Ramadan* fasting, and people are preparing to go to the *Idgah*, or the village fair (*mela*). In the original, we find vivid descriptions through careful observation of children's excitement in going to the *mela*, their divergent motives of both a personal and social kind, the clash of selfishness and altruism in the heart of poor and lonely Hamid when other kids are buying sweets and toys for themselves; their simple yet highly complex jealousy when Hamid buys nothing but a fork for her grandmother. Both the language and observations in the original story contribute to variety and richness of description. Compared to the original, the retelling in the SRC text concentrates simply on the sacrifice of the two main characters, the child Hamid and his granny Amina, for each other. Prem Chand's original story is stripped bare of subtleties to become a bald tale, and the joy of reading is lost, since expressive and communicative elements have been cut to shorten the story.

The last three lessons 7, 8 and 9 are guidelines and exercises in 'how to fill in Bank forms' and 'how to write a formal application letter'. This kind of application in writing may be relevant in the adult learner's life. But here again, the emphasis is on skills related to the structure of language, on the form of the letter or the application rather than on the content of an opinion, facts and message. It is restricted in content to topics of official transactions. It nowhere suggests that letters for both the public and the private domain can be written in a variety of formal and informal ways with contents focused according to one's own selection of emphasis.

Thus, the learning of official and standard language norms and rules, lesson by lesson, within a limited range of topics, is the overall concern of the three Bihar SRC primers. Language-learning is not presented as a social experience in communication which can be learnt through long-term processes of both textual and discursive interactions. The SRC texts contain only prescriptive messages or statements through which the rules of pedagogical grammar and norms for structural formations are to be learnt. It is true that in the complex linguistic situations operating in north India, for example, in the tribal districts of Bihar where both tribal dialects and popular Hindi

varieties are used by people, not all aspects of language variation can be taken into account in the necessarily simple lessons of these texts. But as we have seen, the SRC primers do not give even scanty attention to various linguistic forms related to popular usage. Throughout, the SRC primers have followed a basic pattern which consists of some, usually trivial, event in the life of adult 'illiterates', followed by an educated villager intervening with his paternalistic views, followed by a summary of 'prescriptions' or 'sermons'. Each of these three elements are linked only loosely in a lesson having a misleading title. This pattern is simply repeated over and again throughout the SRC lessons.

The SRC texts have not analysed the causes of people's inaction, sickness, laziness or unproductiveness. They have simply interpreted these as docility and as characteristic of ordinary people's behaviour. 'Fatalism in the guise of docility is the fruit of an historical and sociological situation, not an essential characteristic of a people's behaviour. ... Under the sway of magic and myth, the oppressed - especially the peasants, who are almost submerged in nature ... - see their suffering, the fruit of exploitation, as the will of God - as if God were the creator of this "organized disorder"'.[45] Thus self-deprecation, self-distrust or lack of self-confidence are common features of the 'illiterate' peasant's behaviour. So often have the adult 'illiterates' heard it said that 'they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything - that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive - that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness'[46]. When the SRC texts narrate an 'illiterate' peasant's condition only superficially, they seem to reinforce their lack of self-confidence. The result would be that when the adult learners finally fail to learn literacy skills, this will reinforce their sense of inferiority and alienation vis-à-vis local officials and elites.

The NLM goal or norm is to help adult learners by using literacy skills 'to participate effectively in the affairs of the family, of the society and eventually of the nation'[47]. The SRC text uses second (standard) language norm as against native language to meet this goal. Within this norm, each lesson-text treats the learner as a recipient member of an administrative community (i.e. CD Block) rather than as a responsible family member, or as a socially cooperative neighbour, or as a critical, active and equal citizen. 'A letter to the village chief for a drinking water-pump', 'for building a *panchayat bhavan*', 'for provision of toilets', 'for opening a rural bank', are the topics in writing

[45] Freire (1972), 37
[46] Freire (1972), 38-39
[47] Compendium of Instructions on NLM (1992), op.cit., 152

skills. Though important for likely future use, prescriptive aspects of developmental and official transactions cannot be the appropriate learning topics for beginners who feel alienated from these processes. If texts had shown some interest in analysing the causes of the malfunctioning of public institutions, their political purposes, and people's alienation towards these institutions, rather than prescriptively advising learners to participate in them, their involvement with the text would have been fruitful.

(B) THE BGVS PRIMERS

By contrast, the BGVS primers both in Haryana and Bihar (e.g. in Dhanbad) are somewhat more imaginative and respectful in portraying the life-style of adult learners. We will limit our study to the BGVS primers prepared in Haryana. The BGVS (Haryana) Primer I too starts with the formation of letters, words and phrases. Lessons 1 to 4 mainly consist of isolated words related to Haryanavi people's distinctive identity like '*jawaan*' and '*kisaan*'. Though these words are also part of a well-known national slogan, the BGVS primers have given them a positive meaning instead of merely seeing them as isolated slogans. Since the BGVS is a new voluntary organisation consisting of some committed local community members with relative autonomy in its decisions, the primers produced by them are better suited to language-learning purposes and the identity of the adult learners. Lesson 4 is characteristic of this presentation[48] :

पाठ - 4 हमारा वतन	Lesson 4 - Our Country
यह वतन किसका	Whose is this country
यह वतन हमारा	This country is ours.
वतन का राजा जनता	Country's king (is) the public
राज का हक हमारा	Self-rule is our right.
राज किसान का	Rule - of peasants
राज जवान का	Rule - of soldiers
राज मामन व तारा का	Rule of Maman and Tara (persons' names)
वतन का काम कर	Work for the country's progress
वतन का नाम कर	Work for the country's prestige.

The text is focused on the political and national identity of Haryanavis as Indians. The individual learner as a citizen is at the heart of this identity. The construction of identity, both personal and public, is presented here mainly in terms of professions, occupations (i.e. soldiers and peasants) and political rights. This identity is presented both as local as well as national which is a central feature of the concept of democratic citizenship, i.e. be equal partners in country's future. The text speaks a language which

[48] Haryana BGVS Primer, *Jatan, Bhag - Ek* , Rohtak (undated). The translation is purely literal.

emphasises participation in the political administration of the country with equal rights and responsibilities. It mentions not only national and political identities, but also valorises the ideas of equality and democracy, and the sovereign authority of the 'ruler' of the nation which is the public or '*janata*'. The linguistic economy of this text is evident from its size. It has a catchy rhyme with words and sentence structure which are simple, familiar and meaningful. The words used here are easy, simple to read and meaningfully presented in a poetic 'sing along' rhythm. These short words can be learnt easily and convey to the learners some sense of 'being', of 'who they are' and 'where they are' on the national map. Unlike the Bihar SRC primers, the BGVS text is not vague in its construction of the various identities of the learner. The 'illiterates' here, are not treated as 'other', as second-rate citizens. Ordinary people like Maman and Tara too share equal rights and responsibilities in the governance of the country. However, the text is idealistic in its "nationalist realism" which focuses only on an 'array of images, symbols, scripts, and plots in which the nation is figured as central to the project of modernity' and literacy[49]. The focus on citizenship and participatory rights is of course central to the narrative of the text, but there is no hint about the political economy and cost of public participation. Public life is presented as simple political participation rather than as a 'complex interaction between the triangulated forces of middle classes of Indian cities, towns, and villages' etc.; it does not mention the 'marginalization of those who cannot afford the price of entry into this world and those who prefer to remain outside it'[50].

In the BGVS (Haryana) Primer, Lesson 5 extols the hard work of Ratna and the good harvest on her land. There are no alien words in the text. In fact, the text uses simple words within a formal use-context of standard Hindi. There is nothing which appears unreal or disrespectful. The text goes to some length in the direction of appreciating a rich farm in the rural areas of Haryana which appears natural and genuine to Haryana's local farm environment. The story is, however, implicitly focused on the theme of the 'hard work' which needs to be done by each and every villager. Lesson 6 contains an explicit message that a walk in the open and fresh air is good for health. Sentences are short and poetic,- बाबा का बाग, बाग की हरियाली . The message, though explicit, falls within the norms of popular belief, such as - सेहत का राज है हवा ताजा - (similar to the saying, 'fresh air is good for health')[51]. Compare this with the Bihar SRC primer, 'polluted air, polluted water,

[49] cf. Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge, 'Public Modernity in India' in C.A. Breckenridge (ed.) (1995), Consuming Modernity - Public Culture in a South Asian World , 9

[50] ibid., 10

[51] *Jatan, Bhag - Ek* , 15

life becomes short', which is out of line with popular ideas. Lessons 7 and 8 offer a delectable text containing some simple yet varied aesthetic description of the monsoon season (traditionally considered a season of romance). Monsoon is welcomed by all sections of the people including the landless peasants, women and workers. It brings respite from the preceding long spell of summer heat. It is immensely helpful in rice cultivation. The nature is at its best in this season with dark clouds floating over and above the lush green mountains and plains. Against this background, the text here describes the fascination of two ladies who are enjoying swings in the open garden. The words used create a pleasurable effect in evoking a natural scene and thus produce an involvement which would induce a grasp of the language structure. The women readers find here a justification of pleasurable activities in the open which is a relatively rare scene in rural north India. Lesson 9 is on the significance of the national flag and is titled 'Keep Up the National Flag'. Unlike the SRC (Bihar) primer, it does not demand respect for the flag in a direct way, but suggestively states that thousands and millions have sacrificed their lives for the flag, a symbol of the Indian nation and of national identity; and hence respect for the nation is called for. Lesson 10, however, focuses morally on the evils of being 'illiterate' and appeals to every 'literate' to teach the 'illiterates'. Lesson 11 is again on the benefits of being literate, a text similar to one of the SRC (Bihar) primer lessons. Lesson 12 focuses on nutrition and is put in a simple and suggestive manner without moralising to the reader.

BGVS Primer II[52] begins with a funny story where a boastful Inspector Uncle talks 'big' and garrulously about his strength and courage to his young nephew while passing through a jungle in the dark but succumbs to fear when he hears some scary noise. The description is simple with familiar words but the linguistic structure (morphology and syntax) is similar to formal standard Hindi, e.g. मैं और मेरे थानेदार चाचा गाँव जा रहे थे। ... हमें घने जंगल से होकर गुजरना था। - (I and my Inspector Uncle were going to our village. ... We had to pass through a dense jungle). Though this formal syntactic structure in the lesson is not completely unfamiliar to socially mobile Haryanavis, it represents a decontextualised linguistic norm for many readers, especially women in rural areas. Thus while some may find it easier to learn, such a decontextualised norm becomes difficult for others.

Lesson 2 is a message of a didactic nature on the abuses of 'drinking'. Alcoholism is a big problem in Haryana. The story is about Subhash, a clever and industrious worker,

[52] *Jatan, Bhag - Do*, BGVS, Rohtak (undated)

who falls victim to alcohol addiction due to peer pressure, and finally ruins his health, as well as his family. Though the incident may appear to be a familiar event in Haryana, the text is weak in its construction. The story is so short and description of events so conclusive that its didactic intention becomes clear. There is no other aspect of Subhash's personality discussed here. For example, his initial approval or disapproval of drink, resistance to addiction, his mental agony, nature of his emotional dependence, his own reason and rationality, and personal efforts, etc. are not analysed despite the initial information that he is hard-working and clever. The episode in the lesson is used as an example of agony and family disaster suffered due to addiction. Playing on human fears, the description is followed by a moral message. There is nothing in terms of either description of the event, or the language used, or in terms of explanatory discussion, that a common person does not know. Subhash seems to do little to quit his habit but drinks more and more, quarrels, swears and wastes money. The situation is presented too simply, and concentrates only on addiction as a self-indulgence of fatal consequence. This is typical of the middle-class and upper-caste adult educators who see and depict it as a stupid and wishful indulgence. The text is silent about the social class of such individuals, their repression, their emotional dependence and weak-willed nature, socialisation and motivational aspects of action or inaction.

Lesson 3 looks like a lesson from a primary school geography book and contains some factual statements about our planetary system, particularly about the sun and the moon. Here, the story is presented in a dialogue form, as a conversation between a college-educated youth and his superstitious and 'illiterate' aunt. The dialogue is so weak that it mainly appears as a monologue from the educated nephew. However, each piece of information is presented as a straight fact which is interesting for most of the adult learners. These facts are grasped by learners as validated facts, as scientific truths of modern discovery. Though learners were earlier ignorant about these facts, they readily believed them to be true, because their validity claims had already become public[53]. Lesson 4 narrates the foolishness of an 'illiterate' mother who mistakenly gives poison contained in a similar bottle of medicine to her ailing son. In the end, the woman despises herself for being 'illiterate'. This story too is weak in construction. The sequence of events is incoherent, and since the language-norm is unfamiliar, inconsistencies in the story are not usually noticed by learners. Despite inconsistencies in the linkage of events, many

[53] Darshini Devi, a neo-literate woman in Deshalpur village (Rohtak) reported that she knew the story that 'man had reached on the moon'. (Interview on 18/02/1995)

learners had accepted the story to be true because they had understood only its gist. They could not take note of 'faults' or 'missing' links in the story presented in standard Hindi. When they were told the same story in the Haryanavi dialect, they found many 'faults' and 'missing links' in it.

Lesson 5 is a straight didactic message on the importance of trees and forests, and is similar in form and function to the SRC texts we have studied earlier. Lesson 6 speaks of the need for 'National Unity' in a very abstract language which must be unintelligible to many of its readers. Its language is unfamiliar, formal and abstract. For example, 'I' indicating the first person is used for the Indian nation. 'India' describes how "she" came into existence after many sacrifices and struggles. The text speaks continuously in the formal, first person of standard Hindi with use of some abstract concepts: 'Brothers, I was born many decades ago. Some call me *ekta* (unity) , others may call me *bhaichara* (fraternity or brotherhood)'[54]. The text ends with a dramatic statement of caution: 'Today, if I die, tomorrow, there will be a civil war'[55]. Lesson 7 is a short and simple summary of the popular mythical story of 'Srawan Bhakti'. Srawan, the faithful son sacrifices himself for the sake of his parents. Here, the socially characteristic sentiments and behaviour of the characters who play their part in the original, are lost in the retelling. Lesson 8 is a letter from a neo-literate mother to her daughter in which she narrates the joys and experiences of her newly learnt skills. The joys and experiences she narrates echo a personal feeling, which is interesting. Unlike the SRC texts, it does not put forward an official view, which looks artificial. Lesson 9 is a simple poem containing a jumble of words from previous lessons; it is presented in a parody form in order to emphasise different intonations for the words and alphabets learnt earlier. It is an interesting tongue-twister which provides both fun and valuable practice in pronunciation and reading.

The BGVS (Haryana) Primer III begins with a lesson on sanitation, good housing and the need to maintain cleanliness[56]. Though prescriptive, the lexical structure of the text is written in simple, yet standard Hindi and the message is impersonal, i.e. it is not directed to any individual or a group. The message is presented as a point of view of an old *fauzi* uncle. The patterns of stress and intonation cater to familiar speech-norms used traditionally by respectful literate villagers. Hence, it does not appear to be either offensive or disrespectful to the reader. Lesson 2 is a text about care and health guidelines for pregnant women, and is a prelude to Lesson 4, which is about care of new-born babies.

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[54] *Jatan, Bhag - Do*, 26
[55] *Jatan, Bhag - Do*, 26
[56] *Jatan, Bhag - Teen*, BGVS, Rohtak (undated)

Unlike the SRC texts, it does not directly present the required information in a tabular form of medical charts. Rather, it starts with a full background discussion about health care and certain common misapprehensions, and is presented as a discussion between three ladies, the pregnant Anita, her mother-in-law and her lady-doctor. Unlike the SRC texts, it is not just a catalogue of information, but contains several opinions and information given in response to certain doubts and misgivings. The presentation is realistic, close to the everyday experience of expectant mothers. It is written in standard Hindi lexical style, but the form is very simple, closer to popular Hindi and the words are familiar to the learner. Both the texts in Lessons 2 and 4 help in understanding the organisation of a health guideline which is presented to its readers in a tabular form only at the end of Lesson 4.

Lesson 3 is a poem on folk consciousness and people's rights which is presented in the form of a revolutionary appeal to break free and join women's liberation. Here the 'oral' norm of repeated use of verbs in conjunction with popular and 'forceful' words, which is familiar to adult populations throughout north India, is used in a meaningful way: 'If women do not get up, oppression (*julm*) will increase, the oppressor will be more dominating'[57]. The poem is written 'precisely because the nature of power relations in northern India often prevents women from speaking in many political contexts and in the presence of senior male affines'[58]. It has been often recognised by women themselves in their lore that they must learn to communicate in order to subvert the official language of the dominant discourse and subtly articulate 'a contrapuntal reading of gender and kinship relations'[59]. Though the above poem uses a different language (e.g. standard Hindi) to the learner's 'oral' language, features of the 'oral' (e.g. use of stative verbs) are well used for effective communication. Unlike the modern prose style of *Khari-boli* Hindi used by all TLC texts, which is of only recent origin (i.e. a hundred years old), poetry, particularly 'oral' poetry in north India, goes back to an older tradition. Both high literary poetry and folk poetry are of greater antiquity, and have been closely associated with various local dialects. Hence, it is intelligible to all local dialect speakers and has been the best medium of popular and traditional literacy[60]. The words used here in the lesson-text form part of this 'oral' revolutionary tradition in poetry and produces a literary appeal which resonates with the psychological repression, stresses and anxieties suffered by women who are still suppressed by the obsolete values of a patriarchal culture. 'As a group', write Raheja and

[57] *Jatan Bhag - Teen*, 12-13
[58] Raheja and Gold (1994) Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India, 23
[59] Raheja and Gold, ibid.
[60] R.A. Dwivedi (1966), A Critical Survey of Hindi Literature ; and Raheja and Gold (1994)

Gold (1994), 'the women of rural North India impressed us overwhelmingly with their sense of their own power, dignity, and worth. This worth was not something nourished secretly in defiance of a degraded existence. Rather, it was integral to their daily lives, labors, relationships, and to the religious and cultural performances that imbued those lives with meaning'[61]. The text in Lesson 3 appeals explicitly to those meanings and demands a distribution of gender roles which reflects women's aspiration to see themselves as whole human beings and equals of men. The text favours the position of women as 'subjects' and provides a space for their own solidarity, status and identity construction. The women in Haryana had liked the poem not only for its revolutionary appeal but also for its lucid and forceful expression which had stimulated their sense of linguistic appreciation[62].

To return to the primers, Lesson 4, as already mentioned, is an informative text on care and immunisation for the new-born child. The only thing we would like to add here is that this text, like the previous one in Lesson 2, is realistic in its presentation of dialogues, queries and information about care of new-born babies. All the texts of BGVS primers related to health issues are more realistic than the SRC primer. These texts were written possibly with assistance from some doctors who were also active and committed members of BGVS Haryana[63]. Lesson 5, however, is a text with a didactic message which emphasises the need and usefulness of tree-planting. Lesson 6 is a collection of eight couplets or poems of the great religious poet Kabir, which though highly didactic in a different fashion, are popular among common people of north India. Kabir was not educated in the formal sense of the word. Hence the diction of his poetic construction is 'rough', his versification is less than 'perfect', yet the communicative function of 'his utterances have a unique appropriateness and a ring of sincerity which make them highly effective'[64]. Coupled with humour and sarcasm, each of his self-contained couplets convey practical wisdom outlining rules of moral conduct, they refute false modes of worship and prevalent superstitions, and advocate mutual tolerance between religious communities[65]. Besides, Kabir uses themes of popular concern, popular symbolism and a popular language, i.e. a mix of eastern Hindi dialects such as Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Magadhi

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[61] Raheja and Gold (1994), xv

[62] All the (only) 5-6 women learners (out of a 20) in Deshalpur village (Rohtak) who were able to talk about their reading interests in a text or communicate on the nature of the text, reported that the poem was very much 'pleasurable' (*majedaar*) and 'intelligible' (*assaan-samajh waali*).

[63] For example, during our filed-visit to Haryana in February-March 1995, the State Secretary of Haryana BGVS was Dr. R.S. Dahiya, a well-known, committed and popular doctor in Rohtak.

[64] see Dwivedi (1966), 42-44

[65] ibid.

with some amount of Punjabi, to reach to common people[66]. That is why, even when Kabir is didactic and unpolished in his use of vernaculars, his teachings continue to be the greatest source of popular wisdom. For example, consider this couplet (from Haryana BGVS Primer III, Lesson 6): अवगुण कहूं शराब का, आपा अहमक होय। मानुष से पशुआ करे, दाम गाठ से खोय ॥ - The evils of drinking are disastrous. It turns men into beasts and wastes money. In each of these phrases, the words do not directly blame the individual, but the very act of indulgence. He attacks the evils of addictive and excessive drinking through the use of distinctions like 'मानुष' (human beings) and 'पशुआ' (beasts).

Lesson 7 is a catalogue of simple information on Haryana's human geography and a small account of its material progress. The material is of some interest to learners as it tells them a few things about urban Haryana, giving them some sense of regional achievement. However, it does not tell its readers anything about its social, cultural and political problems. Thus, the lesson disguises the actual reality faced by rural adult populations by whom it is intended to be read. There is a gap between what learners actually see in rural life and what the text asks them to believe. It does, however, at one point tell its readers that there is still lot of scope for cultural development which, it suggests, is possible only by active participation of ordinary people. Lesson 8 recalls the story of a forgotten but great freedom-fighter of Haryana. The text is prosaic and simply intends to let readers know about his sacrifices and courage, and the tortures he faced at the hands of the British. Whether the story is real or unreal, it provides the learners very little stimulant for further engagement with such information. The primer ends with Lesson 9 which is an interesting poem on the significance of literacy and identity. Though didactic in its message, it uses simple, familiar and persuasive words (e.g., read, learn, understand, change), and familiar symbols and metaphors (such as time, morning, twilight, night, clouds, sunshine). With these familiar words, symbols and metaphors, the poem appeals to its poor and ignorant readers to understand their own pain and misery, and asks them to change their world of ignorance through the mighty sword of literacy. Literacy here signifies not only the 3Rs but also 'understanding' (सीखो-समझो), 'cognition' (जानो-पहचानो), 'discovery' (as in खोजो अब इस राज को), 'self-image' (as in बदलो अपने साज को), 'motivation' and 'hope' (as in जोश में आओ and दुनिया ताकत मान रही है कागज-खिचो लकीरो की), 'inquisitiveness' (as in पूछो बातें देश जहान) and 'identity' (पहचान). The diction is familiar and the versification rhythmic which draws learners' attention and involvement.

[66] ibid.

In sum, we find that the Haryana BGVS texts are far better than the SRC texts in Bihar. Unlike the SRC texts, the BGVS texts do at times provide us with a realistic picture of life in an ordinary Haryanavi village. Like the SRC texts, they too, however, present the adult learners' life in rural areas as idle and degraded. Still, the BGVS primers contain many significant elements for learning. They portray the learner as learning and struggling for something better. Subjects of the BGVS primers have some pleasures, rights, dignity and self-respect of their own. In terms of communicative functions also, their language text is simple and closer to representing the reality of an adult's life.

Before we go into further analysis of the two sets of primers, it is necessary that we present some idea of the response of the adult readers. We give here a brief account of their impressions because they reinforce our own findings. The adult learners in both Dumka (Bihar) and Rohtak (Haryana) characterised their reading materials generally in the following terms: (a) *moorkhon ke liye kahaani* ('story written for fools', which we have interpreted as 'implicit contempt for learners', as in column 3); (b) *updesh aur bhashanbaji waali kahaani* (moralistic or polemical stories, classified as didactic stories as in column 4); (c) *izzat karane waali kahaani* (stories which treat us with respect as in column 5); (d) *hasin-majaak* (funny and entertaining, column 6); (e) *jaankaari waali kahaani* (useful information, column 7); and (f) *kuchch khas nahin* ('stories with nothing specific', which we have classified as neutral lessons as in column 8. Descriptions concerning an inanimate object like '*makaan*' (house or building) fall under this category. The learners' characterizations of each story are summarized in a tabular form below (Table 2 & 3). Not all learners were able to comment on these stories. A few who did so have provided the basis for our classification here. Sometimes responses differed but in most cases they were similar. We have taken note of only those characterizations which have had some plural responses. Since these characterizations were central to the learners' responses, they may be considered as an indication of their assessment[67].

[67] Of all the learners (47+20) available to us during our field-visit (in winter of 1994-95) both in Dumka and Rohtak (respectively) only a few (6-7 and 4-5 respectively) were able to respond on the nature of the given 'text'. But some others were able to identify which they had 'liked most' and which they 'disliked most' and then, they were asked to give reasons for their 'likes' and 'dislikes'. On the basis of these subjective responses, we have classified them into these categories.

TABLE 2 - BIHAR SRC PRIMERS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Primers P-I, P-II, P-III	Total Lessons in the Primer	Lessons with implicit contempt	Lessons with Didactic messages	Lessons respectful of learners	Lessons for fun, play, pleasure	Lessons with useful information	Neutral lessons e.g., inanimate objects
P-I	9	1	4	2	--	--	2
P-II	9	2	6	--	--	--	1
P-III	9	2	3	--	--	3	1
Total	27	5	13	2	--	3	4
Percent		18.51%	48.14%	7.4%	nil	11.11%	14.81%

TABLE 3 - HARYANA BGVS PRIMERS

P-I	12	1	4	3	2	1	1
P-II	9	2	2	1	2	1	1
P-III	9	1	4	--	1	2	1
Total	30	4	10	4	5	4	3
Percent		13.33%	33.33%	13.33%	16.66%	13.33%	10%

We see from the above two tables that according to their readers 18.51% of the lessons in SRC (Bihar) primers and 13.33% of the lessons in BGVS (Haryana) primers depict a poor image of the 'illiterates' as dirty, unhealthy, ignorant, foolish and lazy. The readers feel that 'illiterates' are blamed for most of the social evils and national problems. The readers accepted that these problems exist but they also think the 'illiterates' are not to be solely blamed for this. On the other hand, the lessons contain stories which present an educated person in a village as more prudent, wise, well-behaved. For these qualities alone, the educated person is also shown to be more successful than the other villagers who are 'illiterate'. In fact for the adult learners these lessons appear to be 'talking down' monologues which ultimately makes them feel miserable about themselves. Almost every lesson in the Bihar SRC primer contains at least one phrase like - गलती क्यों की ? - 'why does s/he make such a mistake?' - connoting blame. Some of these observations have also been noted by the Arun Ghosh Committee Report (Expert Group Report -1994) which was appointed by the Government of India to evaluate the performance of the TLC. This Committee observed that the language and message of TLC primers are guilty of bias against women, lower castes, poor and tribal people[68].

The way out of these evils is suggested in another chunk of didactic stories, 48.14% lessons in SRC (Bihar) primers and 33.33% lessons in BGVS (Haryana) primers. The 'illiterate' adults are morally advised to change their behaviour and attitudes, and specific habits are prescribed as national values. Thus a total of 66.65% of SRC primer lessons and

[68] Arun Ghosh Committee Report - 1994 , GOI, see particularly paragraphs 6.47 and 6.53 (37-38)

46.66% of BGVS primer lessons directly make the adult learners feel responsible for their impoverished thinking, behaviour and awareness. The monologue form, i.e. one way communication content with an overtly didactic message in these lessons represents this attitude formally or stylistically. Only 7.4% of the SRC primer lessons and 13.33% of the BGVS primer lessons depict the life of adult learners as simple, honest and hard working. Only the BGVS primer lessons (16.66%) acknowledge that their readers' lives have some space for pleasurable activities. There is no place at all for pleasurable activities in the SRC primers. Also, only BGVS primers speak of the identity of adult learners seriously.

The BGVS primers provide for some creative situations for learner-text interaction, offering a variety of theme and identity types. Unlike the SRC primers, they contain various types of stories in their curriculum which value cognitive development of skills in the 3Rs as a matter of social and personal experience. Since they are written in standard Hindi, they, however, diminish the learning potential of the average and poorly exposed learners. The SRC primers, on the other hand, fall drastically below the expectation of their readers. However, neither the SRC primers nor the BGVS primers contain lessons which provide training in critique and methods of questioning. This is precisely because the SRC officials in both the states who control the production of reading materials, provide little freedom to their writers; they allow only a limited range of task-activities and identity-types to be presented[69]. Being a subordinate organisation under the control of state bureaucracy, the SRC office as a whole fears the higher authorities for any likely allegation of providing a 'subversive' text. They fear that a critical analysis of the adult learners' condition would be considered as a 'subversive' text by authorities, politicians and the local mafia. Paulo Freire has explained this fear which is more common among the middle class officials and writers:

> Their fear of freedom leads them to erect defence mechanisms and rationalizations which conceal the fundamental, emphasize the fortuitous, and deny concrete reality. In the face of a problem whose analysis would lead to the uncomfortable perception of a limit situation, their tendency is to remain on the periphery of the discussion and resist any attempt to reach the heart of the question. They are even annoyed when someone points out a fundamental proposition which explains the fortuitous or secondary matters to which they had been assigning primary importance.[70]

The TLC guideline does not specify the concrete methods and elements by which issues of primary significance can be discussed and presented in the literacy primers. Since

[69] Informal discussions with two SRC writers at Deepaytan, Patna on 15/11/1994
[70] Freire (1972), 76

the guideline has failed to ensure implementation of its objectives, the SRC officials and writers have followed an old habit of presenting prescriptive language and content rather than providing a dialogical, communicative and engaging content. The generative sources of people's disadvantage or basic needs require not prescription but a sophisticated process of description and discernment. Both material and psycho-social levels of fundamental human needs[71] as thematic contents require to be addressed and presented as aspects of discovery through investigation and discussion by participants who are co-investigators. Collective pathologies such as apathy, fatalism, alcoholism, violence, large-size families, etc. cannot be left at the empirical level of a description or an analysis. They need to be analysed deeply as products of alienation. They must also be linked to the fundamental human needs of a group or a community, and the way non-fulfilment of these needs of a group affects the society as a whole. Confusing between authority of knowledge and authority of position, the SRC writers and elite-officials have often held their own views to be supreme. This has led them to be prescriptive rather than dialogical.

The main official suspicion about and charge against mass literacy campaigns has been that they have caused embitterment of political relations in recent years in some places like Nellore (Andhra Pradesh) and Dhanbad (Bihar), and to a minor extent in many other TLC districts. It has been alleged that literacy campaigns have used rancorous expressions of disaffection in their public meetings and in their reading materials, speaking or writing about social and political injustices in the area. Such a charge and suspicion about literacy and its effects are grossly misstated as well as unqualified. Political disaffection is primarily caused by objective realities, certainly not by education and literacy. Despite NLM regulations and guidelines on primer-writing, the SRC officials and writers have consciously or unconsciously followed an older tradition in their writing. The discourse-language which they have used in TLC primers is paternalistic, a characteristic of an older Brahminical tradition. No Hindu thinker or writer ever seems to have 'examined the nature of sectional interests, the reasons why social groups come into conflict, the way political conflicts arise from clashes of material interests and ideologies, how a group acquires political power and presents its interests as general interests and so on'[72]. The SRC officials and writers too have avoided these concerns, and instead, they have put didactic messages in the text of TLC primers. The Expert Committee Report

[71] The following human needs may be considered as fundamental: subsistence, protection, affection, identity respect, creation, leisure, participation in decision-making, freedom, etc.

[72] Bhikhu Parekh (1986), 'Some Reflections on the Hindu Tradition of Political Thought' in T Pantham and K.L. Deutsch (eds.), Political Thought in Modern India , quoted in Satish Saberwal (1995), Wages of Segmentation ,128-132

(1994) has recommended that if adult literacy programmes are to make an attitudinal impact and empower adult learners, it is essential that greater attention is paid to a critical and positive portrayal of women, minorities, and the weaker sections of the society who constitute the large chunk of adult learners[73].

The failure of the SRC officials and writers also lies in a failure to distinguish properly between adults and their world. The description and language of primers leads us to believe that the sole underlying assumption of TLC writers is that adult 'illiterates' are mere 'living objects' in this world. 'Illiterate' people are treated as mere spectators, not co-creators; they are only recipients of what 'literates' or elites create for them. They perceive an 'illiterate' as having an undeveloped mind which is fit only to receive information. Due to their own paternalistic training and education, they have come to believe that 'illiterates' cannot enter inside their own consciousness, that only a certain aspect of consciousness can be made available to them. The objects and reality which surround an 'illiterate' can possibly be made accessible or available to him, but he cannot develop a consciousness of this consciousness, which can be available to him only through an elite. In other words, the way skills, ideas, values and informations are made available to adult learners must be controlled and their distribution regulated. This is done through various non-communication or miscommunication strategies of an anti-dialogical education.

A fully formed syllabus or curriculum of adult education programmes reasserts the ideology of the ignorance of 'illiterates'. It reinforces a common prejudice that adult learners are completely ignorant, and display certain common characteristics such as fatalism, docility, aggressiveness and self-distrust. It is true that many 'illiterates' such as landless peasants and workers suffer from these characteristics. As Freire has explained:

> The peasant is a dependent. He can't say what he wants. Before he discovers his dependence, he suffers. He lets off steam at home, where he shouts at his children, beats them and despairs. He complains about his wife and thinks everything is dreadful. He doesn't let off steam with the boss because he thinks the boss is a superior being. Lots of times, the peasant gives vent to his sorrows by drinking.[74]

As long as literacy primers do not explain the causes of the illiterates' condition in a critical and positive way and in a dialogical manner, they will continue to be alienated and unaffected by literacy programmes. Instead of discussing these problems in their entire complexity, the TLC primers moralize against certain acts (such as alcoholism), and prescribe certain behaviour and values as examples of civic virtue. For example, having a

[73] Arun Ghosh Committee Report (1994), 37-38
[74] Freire (1972), 40

small family is a standard TLC value even though it differs with poor people's perception of the value of having a large family. Along with these, the TLC primers propagate certain modern myths such as 'theirs (e.g. peasants world) is a free society', that 'they can work freely whenever and wherever they like', that 'education is available if they wish to educate their children', etc.. The TLC primers are replete with instances of these myths and prescriptions. The SRC primers can also be seen as propagating the myth that the government and its officials are honest, and that they are doing their best to improve the lot of adult learners, but it is the latter who are lagging behind.

Thus, because of the high premium placed on formal linguistic skills and structures and some didactic concerns, we find that the literacy acquisition of learners is dismally poor. All the learners examined during our field visit (in both the states) invariably needed some help with reading, writing and comprehension. Only a few, who had mugged up some of the stories, were able to recite extempore without looking at the script, but when interrupted at one particular point, they too were unable to read further. Standardised Hindi as the medium of instruction, the one-dimensional nature of the content and the premium placed on formal norms of language, were found to be highly significant factors affecting the language learning ability of the adult learners. The other main problem is that these primers are written not only from a perspective of a standardised Hindi linguistic norm, they also contain many difficult and alien words of a Sanskritised Hindi. We list some of these words and their popular substitutes below[75] :.

Bihar Primer BP I	'*samata*' instead of '*barabari*' (meaning 'equality'), p. 28; '*sheesh*' instead of '*mathe*' (meaning 'head'), p. 42
BP II	'*seemit*' instead of '*kam*' (meaning 'less'), p. 29; '*kushalta*' instead of more popular '*mahirpan*' or '*teji*' or '*nipun*' (signifying 'skillfulness'), p. 42; '*jagriti*' instead of '*beehan*' (for awakening), p. 49; '*Vriddhi*' instead of '*barhotari*' (growth), or '*phayada*' (profit) p. 53; '*utpadan*' instead of '*paidawar*' or '*upaj*' (signifying production), p. 54; phrase like *'krishi yogya bhumi'* instead of *'kheti layak jamin'* (fertile land), p. 54; phrase like *'bankon ki bhumika agrani hai'* instead of *'bankon ki jimmeddaari pahale hai'* (Bank's role is of primary importance), p. 54
BP III	'*anupayogi*' instead of '*bekar*' (non-useful), p. 17; '*jal*' instead of '*paani*' (water), p. 21; '*vayu*' instead of '*hawa*' (air), p. 21; '*ullas*' for '*khusi*' (happiness) p. 22;
Haryana Primer HP I	'*manav*' for '*manushya*' or '*admi*' (human beings), p. 6
HP II	'*shapath*' for '*kasam*' (oath), p. 6; '*kram*', '*akraman*', p. 10; '*kshama*', '*bhiksha*', '*pratigya*', p. 18; '*kripa*' for '*daya*' (kindliness), '*krishak*' for '*kisan*' (farmer), '*sanchar*' for '*chakra*' (cycle), p. 22; '*shramik*' for '*majdoor*' (worker), '*mishran*' for '*milawat*' (mixture), '*pramukh*' for '*mukhya*' or '*khas*' (main or chief), p. 33; '*trutiyan*' for '*kami*' or '*kamjori*' or '*galti*' (weaknesses) p. 45
HP III	'*vishraam*' for '*aaraam*' (rest, leisure), '*prabhawit*' for '*mohit*' (impressed), p. 28

[75] Most of these words were identified as difficult words by the adult learners themselves and some of these substitutes were suggested by the VTs and MTs in the area we visited. Most of these substituted words are commonly used in north India.

The examples given in the Table above are related to *tatsama* lexical resources of Sanskrit language. The problem with 'dialect' speakers (e.g. other than standard Hindi) is that they have to face a severe strain on their cognitive ability to make out the meaning of a text which often uses these words and a standard norm rather linguistic codes in which they have proficiency. It has been shown by R.N. Srivastava that the highest illiteracy in India is found in places where 'the written standard variety of a language is far removed in grammar and vocabulary from the local vernacular and home variants of the language'[76]. In the Hindi speaking states of north India, various dialects and the standard language differ mainly in vocabulary and certain features of the syntax. To some extent, most adult 'illiterates' are also skilled in recognizing these differences. One can differentiate two linguistic levels of development of Hindi language in north India nowadays. At one level, there is folk bilingualism and at another level, elite bilingualism. While elitist bilingualism makes a person competent to enter learned sections of a society and ensures for him the membership of the upper class, folk bilingualism is generally the result of ethnic group interaction and competition[77]. *Hindustani*, the popular and mixed variety of Hindi and Urdu, is used by many non-Hindi speakers as well in metropolises like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Delhi. *Hindustani* can be said to share many characteristics features of a pidginized language. However, *Hindustani* as a product of folk-bilingualism, as a pidginized variety of Hindi, though widely used all over north and central India, is never promoted in the field of education because it is stigmatized in the elite-value system as corrupt Hindi. R.N. Srivastava has elaborated on the Hindi-situation and its complexity:

> What makes the situation more complicated is the official status of Hindi. The officially sponsored Hindi is highly Sanskritised and its uniquely formalized book language is meant to provide the base for elitist bilingualism. Secondly, it is this variety of Hindi which is being legitimized as the official language of the Union and is placed in competition with English. Thus we find Hindi, in its high Sanskritised form as a case of elitist bilingualism; and in its low pidginized variety as a source of folk bilingualism. The former is being officially sponsored as a language in education, but outside the educational domain it remains totally dysfunctional, while the latter is functionally employed all over India as a contact language but gets totally excluded from the domain of education[78].

Thus we find that the system of communication in north India has been changing swiftly in recent times. The pattern is changing from folk bilingualism to a diglossic

[76] R.N Srivastava (1994), 189
[77] Srivastava (1994), 177
[78] Srivastava, (1994), 177-8

relationship. Folk bilingualism, which was characterised by individual and social need-based linguistic behaviour, is now slowly being replaced by a diglossia - a linguistic organisation of the higher socio-cultural order which superimposes a standard variety which is a stable, dominant and elite language. This replacement has created a deep linguistic gulf between the educated elite sections and the 'illiterate' masses. In this sense much of the education and literature in the dominant language has been against the popular interest and is 'more likely to stunt and warp young people than help them grow'[79]. Language teaching-materials, likewise, can be identified to cater to one idea of hierarchy - 'the idea that seems to suggest that all that exists, including people, can be arranged in order from top to bottom, from highest to lowest'[80]. It seems that TLC officials too have an implicit intention of adhering to this one idea of hierarchy.

A fact which needs to be reemphasized is that literacy learning is an integrated and interactive process. It is based on interaction and communication dynamics between the reader and the 'text'. When we lose sight of this, the 'text' becomes autonomous and an alien object for the learners. The teachers and the learners should be free to use their own contexts in order to formalize the rules, structures, informations and explanations. This can start with verbal exercises (in group discussions) and demonstrations which, after a certain stage, should be slowly introduced in the graphic medium. Under the Freirean scheme, the first phase of a literacy campaign within a 'problem-posing' method should seek to investigate various 'generative' words, and in the post-literacy phase, it should set out to investigate the 'generative themes'[81]. Words must be linked in such a way that they encourage reflection and action on the part of learners. This can begin with a selection of 20-30 key words (collected from a listening survey or a group discussion) which are very closely related to people's basic concerns. For example, words from a list of shared themes of a community containing most vowels and syllables such as in '*aaraam*' (leisure, rest), '*haraam*' (illegitimate), '*kaam*' (work), '*bekaam*' (unemployed), '*aam*' (mango, ordinary, common), '*aamdani*' (income, daily wage), '*beraam*' (sick), and/or in phrases such as 'work is worship', 'cotton is wealth', 'we are equal', 'to plan is to choose', etc. should be introduced. The initial lessons can also include popular and more relevant proverbs used by a target-group. A popular proverb can provide meaning for discussion not only through 'its overt imagery, its semantic content' and 'shared understandings it presupposes' but also the 'context in which it is deployed, and the communicative functions it fulfils within

[79] Bob Dixon (1977), Catching Them Young 2, xiv
[80] ibid.
[81] Freire (1972) 81

a specific speech situation'[82]. This will enable the adult learners to discover for themselves numerous words and families of syllables and integrate them with other words, sentences and a paragraph to form a text. In order to make a text fully communicative and involving to its readers, the words must be arranged or related in a functional way with survival needs and identity-concerns of the target-group[83].

[82] see Raheja and Gold, op. cit., 12

[83] see Scollon and Scollon (1981); Paulo Freire (1972); and H. S. Bhola (1994), A Source Book for Literacy Work: perspectives from the grassroots , 91-97; and Eklavya's *Prashika*, (1994), 57-78. Here, I have used the experiences of the Eklavya group working with primary education of rural children in central India. I have tried to develop on the insights used by Scollon and Scollon, Friere, Bhola and the Eklavya group. Bhola limits his insight to an understanding of functional literacy whereas I have extended it to more primary concern of survival literacy. For a more general approach to literacy, see our introductory chapter.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

1. A SMALL BEGINNING BUT A BIG END

Fifty-one years after India won its independence, educating the poor, the two-third of its population, has been one of India's greatest challenges and failings. Gandhi's ideal of a participative democracy, Nehru's dream of a giant self-reliant economic India and the Constitutional vision of an egalitarian, secular and democratic nation with provisions of free and compulsory elementary education for all - all of these except some measure of political democracy, seem deeply problematic in August 1998. There have been many tragedies, failures and crises as well as achievements, growth and promises. The greatest change pertinent to our study is the widening gap between the 'literates' and the 'illiterates', between the content of education and the needs of communities, between the aspirations of a globalised modernity and the dynamics of indigenous tradition, between the elite India living in major cities and towns and the India of the ordinary masses living in rural and semi-urban areas, between the vernacular elites and the bilingual English-speaking elite, and finally, but not the least, between the actual intent of the government and its promises.

India's entire bureaucratic administration and the public attitudes surrounding it, as we have seen, still bear the mark of colonial administration, and its self-seeking elites and ambitious middle classes are getting more distanced from the ordinary people. Officially, still almost half (48%) of the entire population is 'illiterate', but even among those so-called 'literates', less than half can read, write and comprehend well. Among communities where deprivations converge, like gender, caste, rural and ethnic background, the literacy rate is as low as 4.5%, as in the case of the rural tribal women of Rajasthan. During the last 51 years, India has a good record, of progressive social legislation, a tremendous increase in major industrial and food production, enormous quantitative growth in all sectors of education, especially in higher education. Over a hundred national commissions and committees have been appointed to discuss educational issues, a dozen community development projects and literacy campaigns, yet the desired goals have not only been unfulfilled, but policy implementation at the lower levels of public life has remained largely ignored.

The reasons for such major failings have been, as our TLC case studies show, mainly three: (i) The state never initiated a fresh and comprehensive look at its colonial bureaucratic practices in the areas of mass education, literacy and mass culture. This, apart from many committee and commission reports, was clearly evident in the study of the two national policies on education, e.g. 1968 and 1986 that India has put forward since independence. (ii) The government, and its permanent bureaucracy never seriously meant what they professed, particularly in allowing the people to 'participate' and share their public concerns. They never bothered to set up institutions to make state public activities accountable to the public. And finally (iii) factors of lesser significance were under-resourcing, under-training and the unconvincing promises of the government relating to the provision of mass education and development. Despite numerous committee recommendations, the state did little to initiate any major change in policy in education with strict guidelines for ensuring full implementation.

State institutional practices, official and elite's attitude, habits, public policies, public values, violence and mass apathy have been mostly a result of historical structures and discourses set by colonialism which were inherited by the Indian National Congress which took on the governance of the country in 1937. The dominant, elite nationalist thinking, including that of the Congress remained in favour of the basic premises of colonial and modernist discourses. They adopted a slightly reformed (anglicized) Brahminical attitude towards the masses of India. There was some vigorous opposition, and radical proposals from figures like Gandhi, K.C. Bhattacharya, Gujubhai Badheka, B.R. Ambedkar, Phule, etc. but leaders in general reproduced the colonial discourse which had constructed an identity of 'otherness' for the Indian masses. This 'other' identity, which considered the masses as the main and truly representative people of India, viewed them as morally and intellectually inferior people. Such an identity construction allowed a benevolent and missionary attitude towards the masses on the part of colonial rulers and their Indian allies, i.e. old aristocrats and new educated-elites. In this development, the masses remained at the receiving end of all state initiatives while it privileged those who took on the responsibility of leading and civilising the nation. The elite bothered about mass mobilisation as far as it was necessary for the national movement in ousting the British, but had no clear public and cultural imagination for the emerging nation-state.

In the peasant-dominated hinterlands of north India, the colonial state had lacked reach, control and penetration. 'Some aspects of modernity, like democracy, were welcomed and owned by some groups' in this region depending on their interests, most

others demonstrated 'unsuspected reserves of cunning to fend off well intended invasion of their traditional practices'[1]. This was the nature of beginning stages of modern politics and bureaucratic or administrative practices broadly followed all over north India. To the extent that British felt the need to change 'the dominating and governing mechanisms and most emphatically the *imaginaire*, the way Indians conceived of the social world and its possibilities of organization', rather than 'the whole structures of Indian productive life', they made both education and administration a means to this end[2]. In utilitarian terms, there was little need for deeper penetration and further administrative control in this region. Thus in the cultural and educational field, this region saw very less developed intellectual and public activity. In terms of institutional development, this region saw slow growth of formal organizations, of public discourses, academic and other intellectual (literary or journalistic) activities.

The British favoured a hierarchical model of education where most public funds were invested in domesticating and training a privileged elite class. The same policies, with the addition of vertical and horizontal expansion particularly in the field of technological and professional training, were continued by Nehru and his followers. Mass education and literacy, as in the colonial period, were considered by him to be marginal issues. Although he prioritized higher education, he did not bother to allow the educational system (and culture) as a whole to develop an independent character and identity of its own free from the demands of the corporate order and market-oriented productive skills. The educational agenda in the post-independence period did never visualise a comprehensive and integrated pedagogy for a viable solution to mass poverty, mass apathy and mass illiteracy. India's diverse and plural communities remain either unrepresented like the women and minorities, or misrepresented like the tribals.

Faced with mass apathy and disaffection, policy makers have been quick to blame people for the failings of public policies, though at times they take refuge in explanations that refer to problem of under-resourcing or infrastructural inadequacies. This attitude is evident in most of the committee reports and policy statements. The Kothari Commission Report (1964-66) was explicit on this: '... non-literate people tend to resist change and cling to traditional forms of life, while modernization of social life demands revolutionary changes in the accepted pattern. Illiteracy among the masses is inconsistent with the spirit of the age in which scientific and technical progress determines the way of life and

[1] Sudipta Kaviraj (ed.) (1997), Politics in India, see Introduction, particularly pages 13 and 32
[2] ibid.

standards of living'[3]. Though non-literate people in general have regained some sense of equality of respect with the rise of political consciousness in democratic politics, the chasm between the developed regions and the backward regions has increased. This process partly explains the restricted nature of public policies and political debates in north India where under-development has caused increased competition and group conflict. The government officials, elites and the media-men including academia blame the people of the region as a whole, claiming that they are conservative, caste-ridden and tunnel-visioned. They have had not a single piece of legislation or a public debate on the need to reform the bureaucracy itself. Thus government programmes, before they start being implemented, meet cynical indifference on the part of both the officials and the public at large. This is also the case with literacy campaigns in India, where they start with big fanfare and euphoria, but fizzle out half way along. After a good beginning, the present TLC too appears to be meeting with such an end in most districts.

2. CRUX OF THE PROBLEM

The crux of the problem is not conservatism or casteism, nor even public apathy but the very structure of public policy and its implementation by the bureaucracy. As we have seen, both in our policy chapter and the case studies of Bihar and Haryana, the bureaucracy and the upper class elites have no professional commitment towards the people but are at best involved in tokenism. It is a failure which consists in importing impoverished ideas and methods of language-learning from outside, rather than allowing it to come from people's life concerns. Through our case-studies we have sought to validate our hypothesis that no model of literacy learning which is external to the local public (shared) life of adult learners can be successful and of self-sustaining value. It is the day-to-day local interactional work of language in making meaning for existence and everyday critical and common-sensical discursive practices, which when incorporated in formally organised literacy programmes, can make for a meaningful pedagogic practice.

The TLC officials, or more generally the state bureaucracy at various levels, though particularly at district level had two objectives during the literacy campaign launched in 1988. The first was to publicize governmental efforts and concerns (e.g., literacy, health, immunisation, tree-plantation, family-planning, etc.) for the ordinary masses, and the second to minimize mass aspirations and expectations from these programmes. Some conscientious officials wanted to over-perform but delivered little. They were content with

[3] Report of the Education Commission 1964-66, GOI, 780-81

the huge mobilisation of district-level human resources towards the organisation of the 3Rs teaching and learning classes. Highly euphoric official publicity during the environment building or mass mobilisation phase, gave rise to massive hopes, far exceeding what they were willing to deliver in reality. In all the six districts visited both in Bihar and Haryana, it was a meticulously-designed short campaign strategy in mass mobilisation which drew in adult learners and encouraged them to shed their apathy and disaffection in the hope of learning some purposeful skills in organisation and communication under the TLC. When the adult learners joined in initially, the public scenes of campaign, cooperation and enthusiasm were spectacular. Huge rallies, public speeches, public meetings, slogans, wall-writings, poster wars, inter-personal conversations, persuasions, talking, etc. appeared to generate a new life for the community towards a 'literate' society. But eventually only partial success with tenuous literacy achievements were observed. Neo-literates in poorer areas of Bihar and Haryana, like in Dumka, Madhubani, and some parts of Panipat where the direct and everyday use of the 3Rs is not required by adult learners, were seen to regress back into 'illiteracy'. Under the present 'Total Literacy Campaign' there is nothing about 'total literacy' but only a 'campaign' (publicity) about the government's concern for the masses.

In judging how these contradictions are to be addressed, the relevant contrast is between the policy document on NLM/TLC and the actual process of implementation at district level. Though the NLM policy agenda prescribes apparently a local participatory literacy programme, it is controlled through regular time-bound reporting of finances and target achievement. This approach pulls the string towards centralization rather than local participation. While it gives some legitimacy to government's actions, the adult learners are despised and blamed for lack of motivation and their incapacity to learn within a given time-frame. However, local participation, particularly participation of adult learners, was barely visible except at places like Dhanbad and Madhubani, where 3Rs learning was combined with texts and discussion of local issues. Without a single learner's voice or suggestion incorporated in the preparation of a literacy primer or in the general programme, the TLC officials cannot sensibly generate people's confidence, respect and their interest. They have neither the voices (communicative competence in the standard language) nor any room for initiative and dialogue. If there was anything like 'apathy' on the part of the disaffected people at any moment, either at the beginning of the present campaign or the previous ones, it was this silence and the absence of space for dialogue, speech and active interaction with officials and the reading materials.

The architects of TLC, or more generally the architects of educational planning in India, have developed (under the guidance of World Bank economists and professionals) a keen ecological sense in planning both formal and non-formal education as an economic investment, but as we saw in especially in Chapter Three, they lack commitment to a national, cultural imagination by which the participation of the majority of the people could be secured. By the 1980s the Indian state was already under the influence of global 'liberalisation' to match multi-national technology, capital and market management. In the educational sphere, this meant that 48% of India's 900 million population which is ignorant, conservative and 'illiterate', is considered both an obstacle as well as a danger to economic modernisation. The existence of high level of 'illiteracy' and conservatism is seen as a lack of cultural and social permissiveness which these liberalisation efforts need. The developmental perspective under the liberalisation process is a romantic journey with a superstitious faith that capitalist modernisation will bring prosperity to the masses, though there is no sign that it will not remain confined to the privileged sections of the society. In the non-formal educational sector such as the TLC, this called for a crusade against 'illiteracy', to cut deep into the apathy, suspicion and social impression. Upper and middle layers of economically mobile sections in India who constitute only a third of the total population, are happy that a change is taking place, but the burdens are to fall on the lower levels of the two-thirds majority population whose attachment to the government and the state will receive another setback.

The adult learners under TLC, who are targeted to be around 300 million, are extremely poor. They come from the lowest ranks of Indian society. They want to know something useful, learn more and more, especially dispel the apparent mystery associated with reading and writing, the dynamics of the 'literate' world. They also want to learn the 3Rs as is evident from the sheer number participating in the programme. In fact, the literate world is destroying the openness of their oral culture by stigmatizing and looking-down on their language, i.e. mother-tongue or the local variety of the regional language as of Hindi speakers. They want to learn first something which they can understand and then progressively move to learn the skills of the standardised language so that they could also converse and express themselves coherently, in writing and speech. However, a literacy programme such as the TLC, in which entire literacy training is conducted in an alien, standardised, difficult language (as in case of Hindi), is received with suspicion. They want to confront their own apathy as well as moral inferiority complex born out of urban-literate prejudice and social stereotypes. They also wish to understand the modern state, as is

evident from their rudimentary understanding of political rights and their large participation in electoral politics, but they are not able to understand the more durable and subtle forms of political control.

The nature of public reception of government initiative in promoting literacy is not the same for all communities. They vary according to the context of their use by a group or a community. For example, its reception among the tribals of Dumka (Bihar) or that of a low-caste women of Madhubani and Madhepura districts (in Bihar) are different from that of the daily-wage workers in the Dhanbad Coal-fields (Bihar) and the mobile people of Haryana. Adult learners in industrial districts face higher forms of communication which require frequent and daily use of the 3Rs. Haryana women, as seen in case of Deshalpur village, see TLC purely in instrumental terms. This sort of structural demand is not placed on adult learners in poor and less developed districts such as Dumka, Madhubani and Madhepura (all in Bihar). This does not mean the adult learners in these districts do not want to learn. In fact, in terms of the social effect of communicative speech, the adult learners of these districts made more progress than the adult learners of Dhanbad (a coal-mine district with other commercial activities) and Rohtak and other districts of Haryana. Differences in the use of the 3Rs and the need for communication, whether in the written or the oral medium across regions and across professional/occupational demands, is seen to vary historically with the identity perceptions and lived experiences of linguistically and economically segregated communities.

Tribal identity in the absence of capacity for self-assertion is seen by Santhals to push them further down to the bottom of social hierarchy, into complete isolation or perpetual dependency. Although most younger generation tribals, given an opportunity, would be willing to change their tribal ways of life and follow the dominant culture of mainstream groups, this may not solve the larger political problems of tribals as a different socio-economic group and cultural community. Historical experience shows that they have been largely assimilated within the mainstream by a 'forced division of labour', and remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy as an anomic and alienated community. Thus for the tribals, development and education requires not physical mobilisation and slogans but genuine participation in their identity-making which consists first in redressal of grievances as a minority, as the 'other', and secondly restoring of tribal cultural autonomy for further action. Further action is required for redefining and readjusting tribal relations with other communities, to fill the void created by weakening of tribal traditional religion, social

beliefs and social organization[4]. In all this development, role of tribal education and literacy is very important.

Although education and literacy may not directly improve people's condition, it will certainly improve their understanding and expression about their condition. Our aim in this project was not to analyse the entire formal education system, nor any particular institution within the formal set up. We were more interested in general education, mass literacy and mass education, and the guiding pedagogical principles working within it. The first guiding principle, of course is the 'means and end' relationship between the pedagogical model and the educational goals of a society. In this context, we believe that India's diverse populations and plural culture need not a single uniform type of education for all, but an internally diversified education for multiple communicative and ideological functions. This is also accepted, in principle, by the Indian Constitution and formally by the policy makers. Thus, if two-thirds India's population is poor and agriculture- or wage-based, their education needs are to be based on a liberative pedagogy and the functional and communication requirements of a farming community. If the goals of a society are to strengthen its democratic institutions and improvement of public life, its education needs to focus on the processes of decision-making, on public debate and consensus, on public participation and accountability. If a community at the regional level, is mostly bilingual in the dominant regional vernacular, and if it is not likely to use a foreign language like English, then its education must be based on the vernacular. However, at the national level, teaching of foreign languages is a desirable aspect of further interaction and exchange of ideas at the international level.

It seems unlikely that India can solve its educational problems within, say, one decade, the way China and some other countries have done in this century. In the context of modern developments in India, until public accountability of government practices is institutionalized, public policies concerning institutions of mass education and public culture are given a fresh look, and the bureaucracy is reformed, the gap between the 'two Indias' will be increasing disproportionately, threatening the very structure and stability of the nation-state. In this huge nation, with immense resources and expertise, wiping out 'illiteracy' is more than an educational problem. It is primarily a political problem of choice and prioritizing of concern for the masses, and it requires first a bureaucratic reform

[4] U.K. Verma (1990), Educating the Tribal Society of Bihar: Some Observation', Bulletin of the Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute , Vol. XXIX, No. 1&2, 106-107

and the institutionalization of public participation at all levels of administration involved in policy making, as well as implementing community development projects.

3. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

As this study focused on the issue of 'illiteracy' and educational backwardness in the Hindi region, there is a need to have more research in three particular areas: (i) one area is the rise of the Hindi public sphere, as can be seen in the growth of popular literature and popular cinema, as well as high texts of a serious literary nature in all the states of the Hindi belt during the post-Independence period. Some work in this regard has been done by Francesca Orsini covering the period 1920-40 and eastern UP. Such research should identify the nature of the literary imagination available to the reading and writing publics of the Hindi region; (ii) also, related to this, is the examination of school textbooks, particularly the language textbooks and textbooks of history and civics. Some work on them has been done by Krishna Kumar[5] and Shalini Advani[6] but they deal with to theoretical issues regarding the contents of school textbooks rather than offering a detailed study of the curriculum of Hindi medium schools for vernacular students. A study is also desirable of the curriculum orientation and communicative function of Hindi language textbooks prescribed for tribal students. What is necessary here is a close examination of the nature of identity (both individual and collective identities) construction and the nature of language use; and finally, (iii) for our concerns in mass education and literacy, research into the social linguistics of the school curriculum (of each state either individually or collectively) must be done to find out how far the policy on textbook promotion is consistent with the actual textbooks written, and also to examine their relevance in the context of development of mass literacy and vernacular language, literature and knowledge.

[5] Krishna Kumar (1989), Social character of learning

[6] Shalini Advani (1996), 'Educating the National Imagination', EPW, Vol. XXXI, No. 31, 2077-2082

APPENDIX 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF TLC FRAMEWORK

(as given in the Department of Education, MHRD, Government of India document titled 'Education For All - The Indian Scene', December 1993, pp. 64-65. This extract is reproduced here as a comprehensive summary text on the TLC. It represents a slightly more articulated version of government's conceptualisation of the TLC. This document has been prepared for international agencies like UNESCO and UNICEF, and hence extra care has been taken to represent India's deep concern to eradicate 'illiteracy'. Other official documents are not so articulate, they are very much confusing. The extract is reproduced here in original)

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Characteristics of Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs)

There are certain characteristic features of TLCs which make them unique in relation to other programmes:

(i) These campaigns are area-specific, timebound, volunteer-based, cost-effective and outcome oriented.

(ii) They are implemented through the district level literacy committees which are registered under the Societies Registration Act as an independent and autonomous bodies to provide a unified umbrella under which a number of individuals and organisations work together. The leadership to this body is provided by the District Collector/Chief Secretary, Zila Parishad (District Council). All sections of society are given due representation in the planning and implementation of programmes.

(iii) No targets are fixed from the top. The targets emanate from the grass-roots level on the basis of a detailed door-to-door survey which is conducted by volunteers. This survey is not only a head-counting exercise, but also a tool of planning, of mobilisation of people and of environment building.

(iv) The success of the campaign rests on mass mobilisation of all sections of the society.

(v) The campaign is delivered through voluntarism which implies that a large number of functionaries contribute of their own volition, time, energy and resources to the campaign without any expectation of reward or incentives.

(vi) Communication is yet another important characteristics of the campaign; it is also a pre-condition for its success. Communication has to be open, direct, and convincing. Its implications are two-fold. Elements of the oral culture and tradition are harnessed to convey messages on the gains of literacy and the disadvantages of literacy to sensitise those who are literate and educated, and for motivating and mobilising potential learners. It is also a two-way channel of information, ensuring continuous participation of all strata of society in the campaign and provides for continuous correction on the basis of information so received.

(vii) The management information system in a campaign is based on the twin principles of participation and correction. It has, besides, to be accountable and credible. Instead of being enrollment oriented, the campaign is outcome-oriented. Every learner enrolled in the campaign is expected to achieve certain predetermined and measurable levels of literacy and numeracy at the end of the campaign.

(viii) To enable every learner to achieve these levels, a new pedagogy known as 'Improved Pace and Content of Learning' (IPCL) has been conceptualised and translated into action in the shape of a set of multi-graded and integrated teaching learning materials and training. The learner is placed at the focal point in the entire process which, through compact duration and continuous ongoing evaluation, helps to heighten learners' motivation and improve the pace of learning.

(ix) Training of all functionaries involved in the campaign is crucial to the success of the campaign. Training has to be primer-specific; it has also to be participative, communicative and a tool of continuous correction, upgradation and human resource development.

(x) Though the TLC is meant to impart functional literacy, it also disseminates a 'basket' of other socially relevant messages such as universal enrollment and retention of children in schools, immunisation, propagation of small family norms, promotion of maternity and child care, women's equality and empowerment, peace and communal harmony, etc.

APPENDIX 2

Below is a sample of the questionnaires which formed the basis of our open research discussions and interviews, they were often modified and sometimes omitted according to respondents' wishes and willingness to talk during the fieldwork.

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRES

Name	Age:	Occupation:
Gender:(a) male (b) female	Income:	Property:(a) land (b) house

PART - I (GENERAL: LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY)

1. What according to you constitutes a 'Literacy practice'? Please specify and explain in short: Some suggested responses (a) writing a diary, letters, (b) to be able to read and sign your name, (c) to be able to read a document, advertisement, an agreement, a contract, (d) to keep an account of your expenses and/or daily routine, to be able to read the bus route numbers, name of places and stations, (e) to read newspapers, listen to public broadcasts of news, (f) to think logically and express coherently in a given situation, or on a statement/text.

2. What, if anything, did you learn about the role of reading and writing in your life from TLC? (This question is corollary to Q. no. 1.)

3. What was your involvement in the TLC: why did you get involved, how did you participate, did other members allow you to speak, did your involvement increase over time?

4. For the Instructors: what topics do you choose to introduce into your language classes? What is the language medium in which you teach? - (a) the one given in primers, (b) standard Hindi, (c) popular Hindi, (d) learner's language, (e) a mix of all these

PART - II (LEARNING AWARENESS) Index for Adult Learners

1. What is the best way to remember a long story:
    a. memorize the story word for word, or
    b. think about the main things that happened

2. Which of these is more difficult to understand:
    a. the Ramayana or the Quran
    b. Literacy primers or any other school textbooks

3. When you are reading and don't understand a whole sentence, do you:
    a. think about what the other sentences in the story are saying, or
    b. ask someone else what it means immediately?

4. When you listen to someone and if don't understand a point or statement, do you:
    a. relate it to other life experiences or situations, or
    b. ask the speaker and discuss it?

5. What is the best way to read:
    a. skip the parts you don't understand, or
    b. never skip anything?

CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SCALES (Internal/External Scale Question)

1. When you read/listen to a story and forget parts of it, it is usually because:

a. you weren't interested in the story (INT)
b. the story wasn't well written/told (EXT)
c. the story wasn't related to your life/social experience (EXT)

2. When you learn something quickly, usually because:
a. the person/instructor explained it well (EXT)
b. you were paying attention (INT)
c. others were learning/doing same thing (EXT)

3. When you have a problem and you are not able to express yourself, is it because:
a. you were thinking about something else (INT)
b. you don't have the skills to articulate (INT)
c. the problem is especially hard (EXT)

PART - III (TEXTS, CONTEXTS AND MOTIVATIONS)

1. Context
- Do words vary in meaning? Do the words used help familiarity with a situation

2. Are you able to find the main ideas in the text?
3. Reactions to text
- What is your immediate reaction to the text? - useless/useful/can't say
- Do you want to take further action? Are these texts relevant in your context, need and problem? Do you feel the urge to discuss further on these texts?

4. Selecting the task (For Instructors only)
- What is your reason for selecting a particular kind/type of task?
- How do you wish to handle a particular task?
- Are you yourself happy with the tasks you have to perform?

5. Source of texts (For the Instructors only)
- Do you have the awareness of kind of places, organisations and people as reference points for locating texts?

6. Spellings
- Are you aware of ways of solving a spelling problem? Do you try out several variations? Do you try the possible ways of spelling given with its sounds' context?

7. Word recognition
- Can you recognise a word in its context? Can you recognise the various meanings of a word in a dictionary?

8. Motivation (Text and Content)
- Does the content of the text motivate you? If no, why? please specify:-

9. Motivation (Teaching Styles)
- Does the instructor interest/motivate you while teaching you? Why does/doesn't s/he interest you?

10. Motivation (Economic Factors)
- Do you think your economic condition is affecting your interest in learning.

PART - IV (TRADITIONAL GROUP ACTIVITIES AND CULTURE)

1. What kind of group activities (other than your occupational activities) do you participate in: (please specify in each case) (a) religious, (b) cultural, recreational, (c) educational, (d) social work,
2. Do you participate in village / town panchayat?
3. Why do you worship god or believe in religion?
4. Do you think your religion addresses all the social and personal problems?
5. Who has taught you about civic sense in general?
6. If possibly available, what kind of education will you prefer? (a) religious, traditional education; (b) modern education in your mother-tongue; (c). traditional-cum-modern; specify
7. Do you think the elder / teacher / priest's authority is always justified?
8. Do you ever critically think / debate these people's authority now a days?

9. Did you ever critically question these authorities earlier say ten years ago?
10. Do you convey your views to these authorities?
11. Do you think these authorities are free of any biases in their exercise of authority?
12. Do you read / listen to your religious texts critically?
13. Do you think man and woman should be equal?
14. Do you think plants, trees, animals and the nature should be preserved/protected?
15. Why do you think these should be preserved?
16. Did you know Chanakya before the TV serial Chanakya?
17. Do you know what Chanakya is famous for?
18. Does it make sense to you when he talks about state, nation, patriotism and unity?
19. Do you fancy any hero? or Who is your model / hero in life?
20. Do you think the weakening authority of the Brahmins is justified?
21. Do you think your own interpretation of the religious texts is justified?

PART - V (MODERN PUBLIC SPHERE ACTIVITIES)

1. What group activities did you do under TLC: (a) learning alphabets, practicing reading and writing, (b) group discussion, (c) holding meetings for any issue concerning few fellow-beings, (d) organise a cooperative work
2. What kind of media are you exposed to, listen, watch, or read: (a) radio, (b) television, (c) film/cinema, (d) local newspaper magazine, (e) national newspaper, magazine
3. What sort of content of these media programmes interests you?
4. Do you enjoy watching your local programmes (folk genres) (a) plays and dramas, (b) street plays, nukkad-natak, (c) folk songs, dances, hymn recitation, (d) any other
5. What is the message of these programmes (items) generally? (a) religious story, (b) social story, (c) political story, (d) purely entertainment
6. Do you usually notice the writings on the walls, the posters (in the streets):- (a) yes (b) no
7. What usually do you think is the content of these advertisements or writings on the walls?
(a) social issues, (b) political campaigns, (c) commercial publicity, (d) health campaigns, (e) educational campaigns, (f) environmental campaigns, (g) any other, (h) can't say
8. What type of group conversation, gossip, debate do you generally get involved in in day-to-day life? (a) within family, members gathering, (b) peer groups, friends gathering, (c) occupational (d) tea, taarhi, paan shop gathering, (e) formal public meetings, (f) none of these (please specify)
9. What subjects / topics do you usually talk during these meetings? (a) general fun, humour, usual gossips; (b) your personal or family or occupational problems; (c) social problems of your area; (d) political problems of your area; (e) social and political problems of your region/state; (f) social and political problems of your country
10. Have you ever been to a school in your life? (a) never ; (b) less than six months; (c) less than one year; (d) less than two years; (e) less than five years; (f) less than ten years
11. Do you think this education helped you in life? (a) yes (b) no (c) can't say
12. How often do you attend the TLC classes?
13. How useful do you find these learning classes? - useful/average/poor/bad/useless
14. Do these classes discuss the specific problems of your area? (a) yes (b) no (c) cant' say
15. Did/could you suggest ways in which these classes can be made more meaningful and interesting? (please suggest in brief): (a) yes (b) no
16. Do you participate in local / national elections? (a) yes (b) no
17. Do you know why do you participate in elections? (a) yes (b) no
18. Do you know you pay taxes whenever you purchase any article like soap, oil, medicine or garments? (a) yes (b) no
19. Do you know that the government you choose is responsible to you because you pay taxes and because you have elected them? (a) yes (b) no
20. Do you know you have certain basic individual rights called human rights? (a) yes (b) no
21. Do you know you have some fundamental rights against the state? (a) yes (b) no

APPENDIX 3

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF POST LITERACY CAMPAIGN (PLC)

The objectives of the Post Literacy programme as contained in the 'Compendium of Instructions on Literacy Mission' Volume II, MHRD, D/O Education, Government of India document, New Delhi, January 1992, pp. 428-429 are:

* Remediation	- those not covered by the TLC shall be made literate.
	- those below NLM levels shall be enabled to achieve it.
* Continuation	- stabilisation, reinforcement & upgradation of learning.
* Application	- to living & working conditions.
* Communitisation	- Group action for participation in development process.
* Skills training	- (Life skills, communication skills, survival skills)

In order to translate these objectives into effective strategies it would be necessary to:

- Undertake re-survey of all learners to identify left-outs.
- through improved MIS and help of MTs/VTs verify levels achieved by learners
- develop effective learning strategy for those who have completed IPCL III emphasizing
  - Self Reliance
  - Regular Study
  - Provision of Materials
- Orient field level development functionaries to harness literacy effort.
- Produce relevant material e.g.
  - Health related
  - Family Welfare
  - Income Generation
  - Women's rights
- Develop group projects for development action.

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